

# ADVENTURES IN HIVELAND

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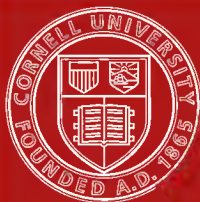
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# HIVELAND

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# ADVENTURES IN HIVELAND

BY  
FRANK STEVENS

WITH EIGHTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS BY  
L. A. SARGENT

London : HUTCHINSON & CO.  
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# ADVENTURES IN HIVELAND

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCING JACKIE, VI, AND TWO VERY IMPORTANT PERSONAGES

IT was a beautiful spring afternoon, warm and bright, giving a foretaste of the golden summer which was to follow—an afternoon when every fruit tree displayed the plenteous promise of its autumn burden in dainty pink and white ; when every hedge and tree pushed forth its pale green shoots ; when fat thrushes and clamorous starlings were eagerly engaged in repairing the winter's damage to their former homes, or building new ones in which to rear their future offspring—an afternoon when winter could truly be said to have departed and spring really come. Every animal and every tree seemed to know it and awake to new life.

The sun had just begun to slant his rays over the chimneys of a low, red-tiled house on to a trim lawn and under a spacious cedar

tree which had monopolised one corner of it to the exclusion of all grass whatsoever—a defect which it remedied by depositing year by year a thick, yielding, but slippery carpet of needles, which even frequent applications of the broom had failed to remove.

This was a favourite spot with Jackie and Vi. They loved to lie on the smooth, shiny needles, where nurse and their elders could not hear them, and discuss the affairs of their little world. At the present moment their political horizon was somewhat overcast, and the burning question of the hour was—lessons, a topic which all sensible children have debated for centuries, and have almost universally condemned. Jackie was wrestling with a particular poem by the late Dr. Watts, in which that worthy divine sought to inculcate industry by drawing comparisons—more or less correct—from his own particular observation of nature.

“ ‘How doth the little busy bee,’

sighed Jackie,

“ ‘Improve each shining day,’ ”

“No, Jackie,” said Vi, who was hearing her brother’s lesson, and therefore felt a certain amount of importance—a sort of reflected glory, as it were, from the governess. “That’s wrong. It’s not *day*; it’s ——” And here she paused, as that worthy gentlewoman was in the



“How doth the little busy bee  
Improve each shining hour.”

habit of doing, in order to give her pupil a chance of reconsidering his—or, rather, Dr. Watts's—proposition.

Jackie knit his brows, gazed fixedly at nothing—his favourite method of seeking inspiration—and began again—

“ ‘How doth the little busy bee  
Improve each shining *hour*,’ ”

with great emphasis.

“That’s right,” said Vi encouragingly. “ ‘And gather —,’ ” she added, hopefully, with a view to assisting him.

“Shut up, Vi!” said Jackie in great wrath. “Don’t pretend to be Miss Forman. She always wants to assist you with the parts you know. Now, do not help me at all,” and again he took up the burden of his tale—

“ ‘How doth the little busy bee  
Improve each shining hour,  
And gather honey all the day  
From every—something—flower?’ ”

“There!” he continued, before Vi could amend his misreading of the text. “I know that well enough now, and I’m not going to bother with it any more this afternoon.” Saying which, he deftly snatched the well-thumbed book of *Poems for Recitation* from Vi and flung it far enough away to preclude the possibility of any further excursions into the moral re-

flections of worthy Dr. Watts. He then proceeded to moralise upon the subject of the poem.

"What rot," he said, "to talk about the bees gathering honey all the day, as if they did nothing else! Why couldn't the stupid book talk about their stings? But I suppose the silly old man who wrote it never kept bees. If he had, he would have been able to write lots about their stings."

Vi was much impressed by the logic of this speech. She was just at an age when a small girl regards her elder brother as a demi-god. Moreover, Jackie had already, owing to his inquiring nature, had a painful experience in the matter of stings, during which period the wounded hero became even more an object of admiration and not a little envy, owing to a certain exemption from writing lessons and piano practice, due to his disabled hand.

"Oh, Jackie," she replied; "of course! Why, if he had kept heaps and heaps of bees, he might not have been able to write at all. He might have been always getting stung, and never able to write or play the piano."

"I wish he had," was Jackie's only comment on this speculation; "and then he wouldn't have written all that rot about the honey."

"Oh, but you are fond of honey!" said Vi.

"Yes; but not with powders in it," retorted

Jackie, who, after an over indulgence in green apples, had been lured into taking this form of medicine in the medium of a spoonful of honey.

Vi sighed sympathetically ; she, too, was acquainted with the ruse.

This remembrance disposed them to silence ; it brought back to their minds the memory of that woeful occasion.

“ I wonder he doesn't say anything about swarming,” continued Jackie, returning abruptly to Dr. Watts. “ Old Charles told me there was a swarm to-day, when we were at lessons. That silly old Dr. Watts only thinks of the honey. I suppose his nurse never gave him powders in it ; that's why.”

Again the reference to that painful episode induced silence. Vi even yawned, and Jackie promptly followed suit.

“ Don't yawn,” he said ; “ you make me do so too. What were we talking about ? ”

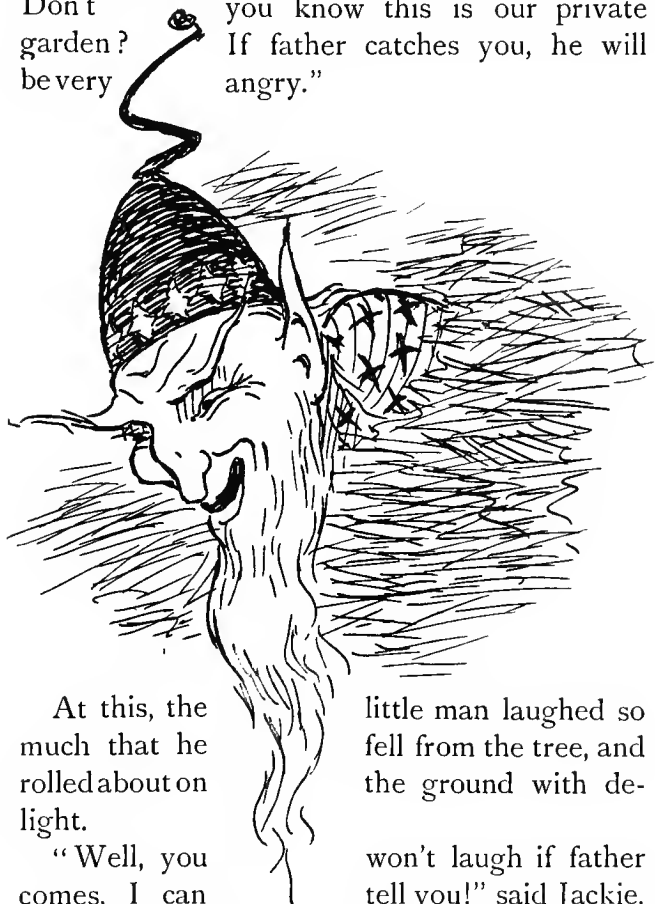
“ Powders,” said Vi, very positively.

“ No, you stupid ; not that. Oh, I know ! It was father's swarm of bees. I wonder what they are doing now ? ”

Jackie had hardly said this when he heard a little rustling noise come from the cedar tree overhead, and looking up, saw a small red face peeping down from among the branches and smiling at him in a friendly manner.



"Look, Vi!" said Jackie. "There's a funny little man! What are you doing here? Don't you know this is our private garden? If father catches you, he will be very angry."



At this, the little man laughed so much that he rolled about on light.

"Well, you come, I can tell you!" said Jackie, who rather resented this free-and-easy behaviour on the part of the intruder.

little man laughed so much that he fell from the tree, and the ground with de-

light.

At length the stranger dried his eyes and sat down beside the children.

"You were talking about bees," said he. "Would you like to go and have a look at the inside of a hive?"

"Oh, yes," assented Vi. "How jolly that would be!"

Jackie looked mighty contemptuous. "You silly!" he retorted. "How could you get in? Why, you are a thousand times too big to enter the door!"

Vi's face fell. "I hadn't thought of that," said she.

Here the little man, who had been watching them anxiously, remarked—

"If you really want to see what the hive is like, inside, I can soon make you small enough. But don't be frightened; I will see that you return to your usual size when you come out again."

Jackie was charmed with the idea; but now that it came to the point, Vi began to be a little doubtful.

"Won't it be very stuffy inside the hive?" she suggested, nervously, to the little man.

"O—oh, O—oh!" gasped the latter, holding his sides as he rocked to and fro with laughter. "Stuffy, inside a bee-hive! Whoever heard the like? O—oh, O—oh, O—oh!"

Why, I give you my word of honour as an Elf-man,"—Jackie and Vi looked at each other in surprise,—“that there are hundreds of human beings who live in rooms where a bee could not exist for five minutes. No, no, my



dear," said he, patting Vi's curls; "don't be afraid. You shall not be hurt, and you'll see how comfortable a thing it is to be a bee. And you, young master, be very careful how you treat them—especially the queen mother.

They are very proud, and always ready with their stings ; eh ? ” he added, with a meaning glance at Jackie.

“ Oh, please,” said Vi ; “ are you really an Elf-man ? I never saw one before. Do tell me your name ! ”

The little man looked very artful. “ No, no,” he replied ; “ it won’t do. You ought to know that no self-respecting Elf ever tells his name to a mortal : it is not considered good manners in Elf-land. But if you want a name ; well, call me ‘ Nameless. ’ ”

“ Very good,” said Jackie ; “ we will. And now, Nameless, we want you to take us to the hive at once. ”

“ Then I shall have to make you small enough to go inside,” he replied.

Vi and Jackie waited, and presently their weird companion began to run round and round them, chanting away to himself some rhymes they could not understand. As he did so, the branches of the cedar seemed to grow bigger and bigger, and to get taller and taller, while the needles on the ground grew larger and rounder ; until at last they seemed to be walking on a lot of tree trunks which lay scattered about for miles and miles ; while, far, far beyond was a thick forest of broad green leaves, which was, of course, the grass.

Poor Vi began to cry. “ Oh, dear ! ” said



"Vi and Nameless came on more slowly behind."

she. "Whatever are we to do? I can never climb over these big cedar needles!"

Looking down, they saw Nameless beside them, even smaller than they were.

"There," said he. "You've got your wish. But, cheer up, Violet! You won't have to climb over all these cedar needles." He touched their shoulders, and immediately they found that they each had a beautiful pair of



transparent wings like a bee's. "Now," said Nameless; "give a jump, and fly!"

"Oh!" shouted Jackie, springing into the air; "isn't it jolly!" and off he flew, while Vi and Nameless came on more slowly behind.

Vi, indeed, found the sensation most beautiful. On and on they flew: it seemed such a long way, because they were so small; until at last they floated over the privet hedge into the flower garden, where there were large yellow daffodils, and hyacinths, and tulips, which

seemed a thousand times more lovely because they looked so huge. It was a wonderful sight. The air, too, was full of big beetle people, whose buzz resounded as they flew about, either in search of honey or eating the leaves and tender shoots of the flowers; while, now and again, an enormous fierce bird would swoop down and carry off some venture-some insect who was,



perchance, over-burdened with honey; or a large, oleaginous, yellow-white grub, who had incautiously left his home in a tulip flower.

Indeed, Jackie himself came near to utter destruction at the hands of a monster starling who had marked him down as his prey; and had it not been for the shelter of a tall daffodil, into which he crept, he would have furnished an item in that starling's dinner.

Poor little Vi, quite frightened, was about to cry; but, no sooner had she seen Jackie crawl out of his hiding-place, than she broke into peals of laughter which would have done credit

to even Nameless himself. Jackie, indeed, looked funny. Covered from head to foot with bright yellow pollen, he stood on the edge of the flower, shaking himself like a canary in its bath, while the pollen flew off him in clouds. As for Nameless, he lay down on a big primrose and laughed to his heart's content.

Jackie was a little hurt to see Vi and Nameless so merry over his mishap; but when he flew down to the flower where they were and saw his face reflected in a puddle on the path close by, he, too, began to be amused, and thus all ended happily.

"Hullo!" said a thick but musical voice. "What is the matter with these new insects, eh?"

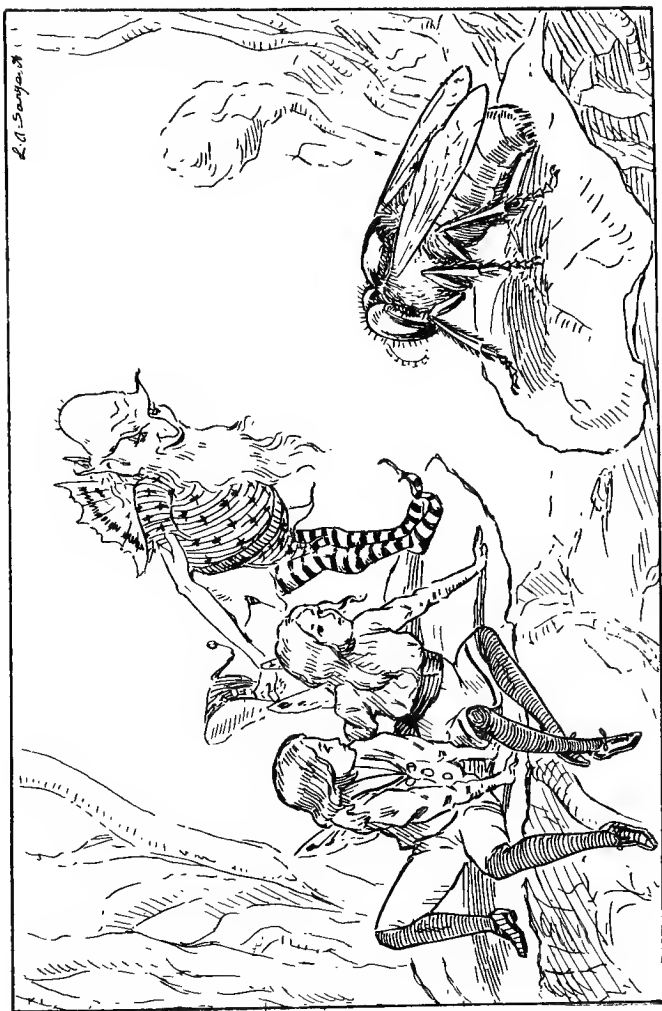
Jackie and Vi turned round, and, to their surprise, saw a large drone sitting behind them. Of course, they did not know that the friend who had just spoken was a drone. This they learned later.

Nameless seemed charmed. "Why," said he, "here's the very gentleman who will be able to help us and introduce us to the New Bee Colony! Nothing could be more lucky! Good afternoon, Mr. Apis Mellifica," he added, with a low bow.

The drone curled his little feelers or antennæ; a sign that he was pleased.

"Good afternoon," he replied, returning the salutation. "A poor humble fellow like myself





“‘Good afternoon, Mr. Apis Mellifica.’”

may be able to do you some service. Life's a terrible bore, and it's very dull in the new hive just now; everybody bustling about, and no honey fit to eat. That's the worst of swarming; it does upset one's regular ways so much, and I am nothing if not regular. Sleep and eat—that is my motto. I can do neither at present."

Vi and Jackie were greatly impressed by their new friend. There was a certain gaiety about him, in spite of his bored manner. At length Jackie summoned courage and asked his name.

"My name, did you say? Ah! well, I suppose you are strangers here. I am Don Apis Mellifica Drone, Chamberlain and Chief Attendant upon her Majesty the Queen Bee of the New Swarm. It's a purely honorary appointment," he added, hastily. "Of course, as a high-born drone, I couldn't think of working like a common bee. We simply live, and the others work for us and feed us; and very badly they do it at times. Her Majesty, however, is pleased to consider that I have a good voice," he continued, with evident satisfaction; "and I and my brother drones frequently give concerts for the benefit of the Royal Household." Here he gave a buzz of such depth, and so loud, that it sounded more like the whistle of a steamer than anything else.

"Do me the favour of flying this way," said

Don Drone, "and see our new quarters. True, we are not quite ready to receive visitors, but I shall esteem it an honour to show you what there is to be seen."

So, spreading their wings, they flew straight to the new bee-hive.



## CHAPTER II

### ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE HIVE, AND THE EXECUTION OF AN INTRUDER

JACKIE and Vi found their new companion so very entertaining that they almost forgot Mr. Nameless, to whose kind offices they were so deeply indebted. Apparently, however, the Elf-man did not mind the neglect, for now and again he would put questions to the Don which appeared enormously to gratify the pride of that gorgeous person.

“Oh yes,” said Don Drone, in answer to one of these queries; “we have every reason to be proud of ourselves. You see, the history of our race is so ancient, and our manners and customs have been the admiration of all ages. Think of the naturalists who have studied our domestic economy and the perfection of our policy; of the poets and moralists who have depended upon us for argument and allusion! What would Virgil and Aristotle, Cicero, Pliny, Shakespeare, or even Dr. Watts have done without us? Why, some of their best works would never have been written.”

"I know," said Jackie, who was anxious to show his acquaintance with the poets—

" 'How doth the little busy bee  
Improve each shining hour?'"

Don Drone gave a loud buzz. "For goodness sake," said he, "don't inflict that nonsense upon me! Dr. Watts was all very well in his way, but he had no soul above the common workers. He was the poet of the labouring classes, and never gave Us any credit. If he ever spoke of a drone, it was only to abuse him as an idle, good-for-nothing scoundrel!" and the Don's antennæ trembled with indignation.

Jackie began to think about stings, which naturally made him anxious; so he considered it best to make a politic remark:

"Wouldn't you like to have stung Dr. Watts?" he asked, remembering his own vindictive feelings towards that poet.

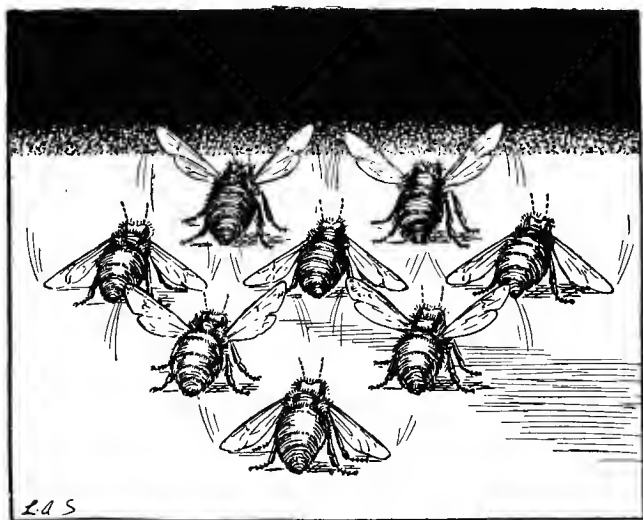
"What!" screamed Don Drone, rigid with rage. "Can it be possible that you have come here to insult me?"

Jackie edged away, his mind still dwelling upon the subject of stings; but Nameless came to his assistance.

"You see, Don Drone," he remarked, "my young friend is not very well acquainted with your honourable family, and does not know

that you and your drone companions are unprovided with stings."

Jackie pricked his ears, much relieved to find that, after all, the Don could do him no harm ; but, at the same time, he thought the drone couldn't be a person of such importance as he



"Flapping their wings so vigorously to and fro."

pretended to be, since he never did any work, and was even unable to sting. As for Vi, she felt no respect at all for the noisy, blustering Don.

By this time they had reached the hive, and were hovering just outside the entrance. What

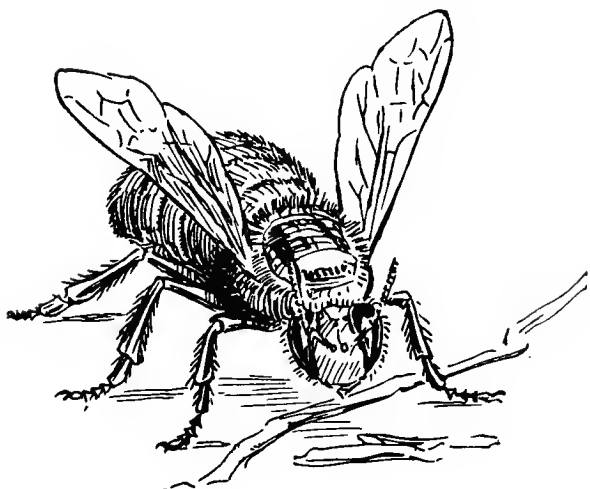
a scene it was! On all sides, bustling worker bees, intent on business, were crowding in and out of the doorway, while a little band of workers was standing on the threshold, flapping their wings so vigorously to and fro that they caused a wind which nearly blew poor little Vi away.

"Oh, dear!" she complained; "whyever do they make such a disturbance with their wings? I can hardly hover for it!"

Nameless chuckled. "That's to keep the hive from becoming what you called 'stuffy,'" he explained. "These bees are on duty for half an hour at a time, and have to act as ventilators. When you come inside, you will notice that more are placed there, in order to keep the air in circulation. So, you see, my dear, bees are just as sensible as other people when it comes to a matter of fresh air. Indeed, I think they are more particular about it than many folks."

By this time both Jackie and Vi had found time to notice the workers, as well as Don Drone's companions; many of the latter were going out for an afternoon fly round the garden, by way of passing the time, which seemed to hang rather heavily upon their hands—that is, if bees have such things.

"Oh!" said Jackie, "I see now, Don Drone, what a difference there is between you and the



working bees. You are much fatter.”—The Don drew himself proudly up.—“You have a beautiful round head and large bright eyes ; a fine, hairy tail ; and your voice is so loud and deep ! And—and—” he continued in his excitement, “you have no sting.”

The Don gave a loud hum of disapproval.

“Can’t you leave that matter alone ?” he retorted, crossly. “You have mentioned it twice this afternoon. I don’t think it at all nice of you ; and what is more, I’ve a very good mind not to take you over the hive, for saying so !”

Again Nameless came to the rescue by adroitly changing the subject :

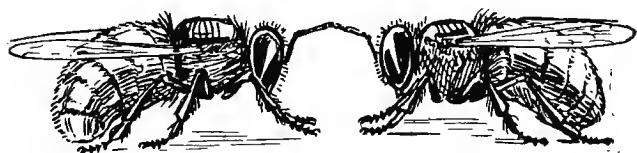


"Quite right, Jackie. You have described Don Drone very well. He is, as you say, most handsome, and sings divinely. But"—turning to the drone—"what were you going to say about the workers?"

The Don turned up his nose in disgust :

"Surely," said he, "you are not going to waste your time in looking at our servants! They are beneath contempt! Come and have some honey and bee-bread; it must be time for refreshment."

But Vi objected to be hurried off so quickly, for she was much interested in the workers whom the Don despised. Accordingly, she and Nameless had a good look at them. They differed greatly from the Don: to begin with, they were not so clumsy, and had elegant, pointed tails, wherein lurked the deadly sting that Jackie knew so well. Their heads, too, were much smaller, and their delicate antennæ lighter and more active; while their legs were encased in beautiful, velvety fur. In fact, Vi liked their appearance vastly more than she did that of Don Drone, though she dared not say so, because he was easily offended.



Having taken their places in the line of workers who were crowding in at the door, the little party entered the hive, which was guarded by a band of Amazon sentinels, to whom the Don gave the password with his antennæ. At first, everything seemed very dark after the brightness of the sunlight outside ; and Vi held Nameless by the hand until she had become accustomed to the gloom. But after a while she began to see quite well, and was able to notice the band of workers ventilating the interior of the hive. There were fully twenty of them, all clutching the ground firmly with their claws, and steadily fanning with their wings to keep the atmosphere fresh and clear. Now and again, when one was tired, another bee would replace him, and he would then go away to attend to other duties and rest his wings.

Don Drone, who had been standing silent for some time, thought this a good opportunity to show off some of his importance, and began to apologise for the state of the hive.

“You must excuse a little confusion in our arrangements to-day,” he said. “We only came here this morning, and the place is not properly cleaned up.”

If the hive was not, as Don Drone said, in proper order, it evidently soon would be, for gangs of workers were busy, dragging and



"The executioner bee raised himself on his wings, and gently hovered above the clammy mass."

hauling away any bits of stick or straw which they had found on their arrival, pushing and pulling them out of the door. But what attracted the children's attention most of all was a large assemblage of workers who seemed to be greatly agitated.

"What's the matter?" said Jackie, who was always deeply interested when he saw a crowd.

The Don yawned. "I don't know," he replied. "Some stupidity of the labourers, I suppose. I'll inquire," and he beckoned to another majestic drone, who was lazily watching the surging throng. The two gorgeous beings saluted one another with the greatest ceremony by touching each other's antennæ, and the Don asked his companion the cause of the disturbance. The latter again made a ceremonious salutation, and said :

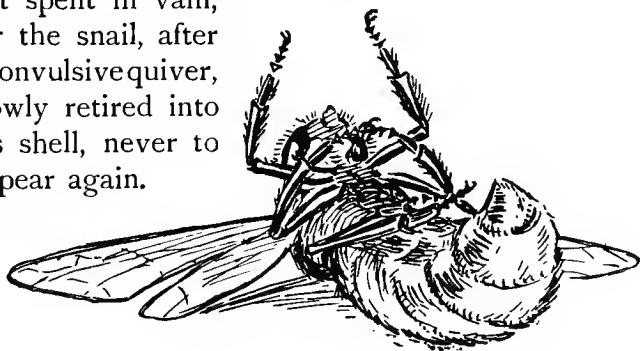
"Ah! Some silly snail has, I believe, had the impudence to come in, and wants to take up his quarters here. Ridiculous! They are going to kill him," and he relapsed into silence, quite exhausted by so much talking.

"Oh!" said Vi. "How are they going to do that?"

"Why, you silly," blurted out Jackie, "with their st——," and stopped short on seeing a warning look in the Don's face, remembering that stings were an unpleasant subject to that exalted personage.

At last the crowd separated, and they were able to see a huge snail standing on the floor of the hive. One worker alone remained in the circle beside the slimy creature. There was a dead silence, and Jackie could feel his heart go thump, thump against his ribs; while poor little Vi turned aside, not wishing to see the terrible tragedy that was about to take place.

Presently the large horny shell lifted itself, slowly at first, and a soft green body emerged leisurely from beneath it. The executioner bee raised himself on his wings and gently hovered about the clammy mass, then, swiftly darting downwards, drove his straight-pointed sting up to the hilt in the snail's body, with such force, indeed, that it was torn out by the roots. For a moment the executioner's wings fluttered in agony, then, feebly falling upon the floor of the hive, he rolled over, dead. But his life was not spent in vain, for the snail, after a convulsive quiver, slowly retired into his shell, never to appear again.



In a moment all was life and movement once more. The dead executioner was carried off to be thrown outside the hive, while the workers consulted as to the best method of disposing of the snail's enormous body. It was clear that they could not move it, for in its death agony the creature had firmly fixed itself to the floor.

"Whatever will they do with it?" inquired Jackie.

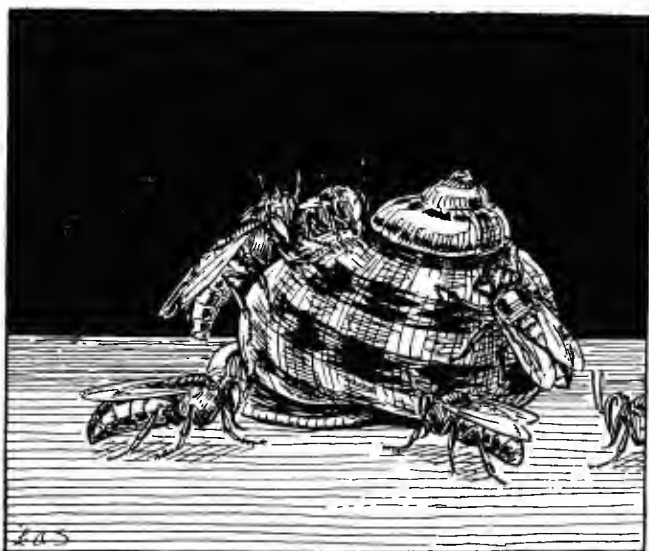
The Don looked at him in surprise. "Don't you know?" said he. "It's quite simple. It will be 'gummed up.'"

Vi did not quite understand; so she turned to Nameless, and asked him to explain to her what the Don meant, as she was afraid she might offend the pompous drone if she asked too many questions.

Nameless smiled. "It's a very simple thing, my dear," he said, "and you will see in a minute. Look!" he continued, pointing to a worker who had just come in. "They are going to begin at once."

Vi looked in the direction that Nameless had indicated, and there saw a curious sight. A little procession of workers came crawling slowly in, hardly able to move; as they drew nearer she could see that they were covered with a sticky gum, which gave them the appearance of having dipped their legs in a glue pot. No

sooner had they arrived, than another gang of workers began to bite and scrape the gum from their legs and bodies with their jaws, at the same time mixing it with wax, which they took from little pockets inside the joints of their



"They proceeded to spread evenly this composition over the body and shell of the dead snail."

own bodies. These they mixed and kneaded in their mouths, until they had gathered quite a heap of soft, waxy gum. One after another, they proceeded evenly to spread this composition over the body and shell of the dead snail, until at last the only trace of the rash

intruder was a brown hillock in the middle of the hive.

Meantime hundreds of other workers came crowding in, all bringing their load of gum, to be scraped off, mixed, spread over the floor and pushed into every crevice and hole until the entire hive was lined with an even coat of the substance.

Jackie and Vi were delighted to see the bees so busy. They were reminded of the gangs of men they had seen in the streets of London spreading asphalt and rolling it to make an even surface. Don Drone seemed to think the performance very dull, and buzzed sleepily to himself, now and again saluting some passing drone who came in, heavy and sleepy, but always anxious for honey.

Suddenly, in the midst of work, there came a pause. The toilers all stood still, while from the doorway the workers entered, one after another.

"Hullo!" said the drone, waking up. "There's a prospect of bad weather. Don't you see how they are all returning? I can't for the life of me understand why they won't work when it's wet. Sheer laziness, I believe."

Nameless looked anxious. Turning to Jackie and Vi, he said, "I think we had better get away before the storm begins. It won't do for you to be late for tea." To Don Drone he



made his most polite bow, which the Don acknowledged. "I am sorry to say we must be going. I trust you will excuse us, and permit us to pay our respects to you to-morrow afternoon?"

"Certainly, certainly," replied the Don, with his most patronising air. "I shall be most happy—a pleasure, I assure you. I trust my young friends"—with an elaborate bow—"have enjoyed themselves. Good day," saying which, the Don buzzed off to join a crowd of drones who were lounging in one corner of the hive.

Nameless, Jackie, and Vi soon made their way out, passing the ventilator bees still busy with their wing fans, and who were now the only bees at work. True enough, when they got outside they found the sky overclouded, with every prospect of a storm.

"We must be quick," said Nameless, "or we shall be caught," and, joining hands, all three flew to the cedar tree, where they alighted just as the raindrops began to fall. "Quick!" he repeated. "Shut your eyes. Now count twenty, and then open them."

The children did as they were told, and on opening their eyes, found that they had once more grown to their usual stature.

"Now, remember," continued Nameless in his most impressive voice, "you must come again to-morrow at the same time, and I will

then take you to see the hive and Don Drone. If you are good, you shall be presented to her Majesty the Queen. But remember also, that if you are naughty or give any trouble, I shall not take you. So good-bye," and the little man clambered up the cedar tree, and was soon lost in the branches, while Vi and Jackie seeing their governess, Miss Forman, at the door beckoning them, ran towards the house.



## CHAPTER III

### THE CLOVER FIELD AND THE PALACE OF WAX

MISS FORMAN was in a state of bewilderment. The children had come in at once when she called them on the previous day, and not a drop of tea had been spilled on the tablecloth ; then, at bedtime, their clothes had been folded with elaborate, if mistaken, zeal, and an unusual air of goodness prevailed in the nursery, while any occasional tendency to an outburst on the part of Jackie was instantly checked. In short, the nursery barometer of moods and tempers—usually most erratic—indicated “Set Fair,” with a strong tendency to remain so.

But though outwardly calm and good, Jackie and Vi were consumed with impatience till the afternoon should come, when they could, as usual, go to their favourite cedar tree to meet Nameless, and accompany him on a further excursion into Hiveland.

By dinner-time their stock of patience was almost exhausted, and once or twice Jackie im-

perilled his chance of fresh adventures by a certain reluctance in the matter of rice pudding. However, he managed to finish his helping, and even, under pressure from Vi, undertook an extra one, more with a view to conciliating Miss Forman than from any personal desire for that nourishing article of diet.

At last they were free, and, snatching their hats from the stand in the hall, rushed headlong to the cedar tree, where Nameless awaited them.

"Why, here are two children," said the little man, "who have been good for a whole day!" and he patted their heads in satisfaction.

"Oh, Nameless!" said Jackie, excitedly, "I've been very good, and had two helpings of rice pudding. Do take us to the hive. We've been longing to go all the morning. I do so want to see the Don again, and the Queen, and the funny little workers."

"All in good time," said Nameless, running round them as before and chanting his spells. As he did so, they again grew smaller and smaller as on the previous day. Finally, the Elf-man touched their shoulders, and the wings grew just as before.

"One, two, three, and away!" cried Nameless; and off they flew, right over the hedge and into the flower garden. "Now, my dears," he continued, "to-day I want you to see the



"Running round them as before and chanting his spells."

workers gather honey and pollen, and then we will go to the hive, where I hear they are going to begin building the comb. I daresay we may see her Majesty to-day. She is, of course, taking the greatest interest in the building operations."

"But where do they get the honey from?" said Vi.

"Anywhere," replied Nameless. "They are not particular. Of course, they get better honey from some flowers than from others. Some of it is quite bitter, such as the honey from the ivy; and some is even poisonous. Occasionally, again, they collect the 'honey dew' from the rose leaves, which are covered with those little green flies. Strictly speaking, that is not honey at all, and they only gather it when the season has been very bad and flowers are not plentiful. Come, now, and see them at work."

"Where shall we go?" inquired Jackie. To tell the truth, he did not like flying about in the open, on account of the birds, who would now and again swoop down and carry off some insect which, perhaps, had been working quite close to him only a moment before.

"I know," said Vi, who had been reading in her spelling-book about bees. "We'll go across the road to the clover field."

"Quite right, my dear," laughed Name-

less ; and, spreading their wings, they sailed away.

Oh, how strange the field seemed to them when they finally landed on a gigantic head of clover and saw around them a thick forest of plants with huge, spreading, green leaves ! How terribly exciting it was to be rocked to and fro on the crest of their flower as the wind blew, and to see the myriads of other insects, large and small, which took shelter beneath its leaves ! It was quite a new sensation, or, as Nameless said, it was taking a "bee's-eye view" of the situation. They had not long to wait, for presently a worker sailed gracefully up to the very head on which they were standing. His keen eye sparkled with pleasure as he selected a fine, large, open, trumpet-shaped flower from which to gather his honey.

Jackie sought to instruct his sister, and said, "There ; do you see, Vi ? He is sucking it up with his trunk, just like the elephant at the Zoo."

Nameless gave one of his hearty laughs. "No, Jackie," he said ; "you are not quite right. He does not suck honey as an elephant would do : he licks it up with his tongue ; which really isn't a tongue at all, but simply a long under lip, though it answers the same purpose."

Both Jackie and Vi looked very attentively

at the worker, and saw him, as he clung to the flower with his hairy legs, unroll his long lip and begin to scoop out the honey, exactly as if he were a cat lapping at a saucer of milk.

"What does he do with the honey?" asked Vi.

Nameless smiled.

"To-day," he replied, "he is simply going to eat all he can find."

"Greedy thing!" said Jackie. "Won't he have to take a powder to-morrow?"

"No," replied Nameless. "To-morrow he has a lot of work to do, and is obliged to feed up now; otherwise, there would be no wax in the little pockets underneath the joints of his body."

"What!" said Vi. "Does honey make the wax grow?"

"That's exactly the case," answered Nameless. "They want a lot of wax to build the comb; therefore, as many workers as possible are busily feeding to-day, that they may be able to provide it."

"Hullo! Good afternoon," said a voice behind them. "How are you?" It was Don Drone.

"Quite well, thank you," said Vi, whose fear of the Don was not so great, now that she knew he had no sting. "What are you doing here?"



"Oh, I am just taking a constitutional," he answered. "There is nothing to do in the hive, and no honey for us: those greedy workers are eating it all themselves. What are you doing?"

"Oh, we are watching them. How busy they are!" said Vi, who was much interested in all she saw.

"Umph! Busy, do you call them? I call them gluttons! Can't see what you find to admire in a lot of labourers," continued the Don. "You had much better come with me and see the foundation of the new comb. It's going to be a beauty, and will hold enough food to keep us all through the winter," and his large greedy eyes gleamed with pleasure as he thought what a snug time he and his companions would spend when the summer was over.

Suddenly he turned pale—if a bee can be said to do such a thing—and began to tremble.

"Look! Look!" he cried in an awestruck voice. "The lizard! The lizard!"

Looking down, they saw a horrible creature covered with scales slowly creeping towards one of the drones, who was basking on a leaf a short distance away. They were all speechless with terror as the big reptile crept, slowly but surely, towards his unconscious victim. A sudden rush, an agonised shrill buzz, and the

monster's jaws closed upon the sleeping drone, who vainly struggled to escape. But it was of no avail. One convulsive gulp, and he was gone.

"Poor fellow!" said the Don, whose nerves were much upset. "I knew him well. He had a beautiful, melodious voice. But come; let us get back to the hive. I can't bear to be out in these wild places, where one may be snapped up at any moment."

Seeing that the poor Don was so nervous and uncomfortable, Nameless winked at the children, who at once agreed that it would be nicer inside the hive, and not so dangerous. So, rising from the clover field, they made what Nameless called a "bee-line" for the hive, where Vi saw the ventilator bees still as busy as ever, pumping in the fresh air. But to-day the crowds who entered were very different from those who had bustled in with such alacrity yesterday. Instead of an active multitude, or even a sticky one, it was a fat, sleepy concourse which thronged the doors. All the bees were simply gorged with honey. The children and Nameless pushed their way in, and looked around.

"See that!" said Jackie, pointing to the roof of the hive. "Whatever can it be?"

Vi glanced in the direction indicated. "It seems like a curtain," she said.



“The monster’s jaws closed upon the sleeping drone, who vainly struggled to escape.”



The wax-maker's curtain.

"G u e s s again," said Nameless.

But they did not do so, for the Don's rumbling voice broke in--

"Don't you see that those are the workers, asleep? They always sleep like that, after a heavy meal of honey. Presently you will see another gang collect the wax from the pockets."

They had not long to wait. In a minute a body of workers clambered up

the curtain of bees, and began to pull their tails. As they did so, others detached the little scales of white wax from the joints of their bodies, and as they collected this, they bit it with their sharp jaws and worked it up like dough or putty till it was quite soft. Then the building began.

First of all, one little worker plastered the wax upon the big domed surface of the hive. Having done this, he retired, gave place to another, who brought up his load and, depositing it, made way for the third, and so on, until there was quite a respectable mound of wax stretched across the roof of the hive.

Then came a pause, and the crowd drew back to make room for one who was evidently an important personage. No common worker this, though he differed in no respect from his fellow labourers. He was the Bee Architect, and his was the task of marking out the foundations of the first cell, upon which all the other cells would depend.

But he was no ordinary architect : he was a sculptor as well.

His jaws began to work upon the soft wax. Slowly and surely he scooped and scooped at the material, piling up the wax at the sides, until the first cell was partly finished, after which he departed, leaving another and yet another to continue the work he had begun.

Meanwhile, from a corner, in which was a dense crowd of workers, came the imperious calling of the Queen :

“Quick, quick ! Hasten the work, that I may place the eggs of the new swarm within the cells !”

Her Majesty’s maids of honour comforted her, gently stroking her head with their antennæ, reassuring her, and telling her that the task would soon be finished. As for the workers, the voice of their Queen stimulated them to fresh exertions, and all was bustle and activity.

Jackie and Vi were amazed, and beyond all things longed to see the Queen, who was thus so vigorously exhorting her subjects to greater effort.

“She needn’t be in such a hurry !” said Jackie. “Can’t she see they are working as hard as they can ?”

Don Drone quite agreed with him. “It’s all very well,” he said, “to make such a fuss about the cells ! Meantime, we gentlefolk are neglected. It only requires five or six workers to feed each one of us ; but, when they are building, we sometimes have to put up with only three or four ; and that’s not sufficient for a person of my rank and bringing up !”

“Oh, dear Don Drone,” said Vi, “do let us see the Queen ! I want to see a real Queen ! Does she wear a crown ?”

Nameless laughed. "No, no, my dear," he said. "Only human sovereigns require such things. A queen bee needs no crown to dazzle her subjects. She rules by love—the love of a mother for her children—and by the duty she owes to the whole hive."

They gently approached the corner where the Queen was sitting, with her maids of honour around her, who fed her with the sweetest of honey and the Royal Jelly, which is a food exclusively reserved for queen bees, except on special occasions, as Jackie and Vi learned later.

"Notice!" said Don Drone, who was now bowing with the utmost ceremony before the royal mistress of the hive. "Notice the respect paid by the maids of honour to her Majesty. It is forbidden by the laws of Bee Land to turn the back upon the sovereign."

He was right. All the maids of honour stood facing their Queen; some were brushing her lightly, to curb her impatience, others offering her honey on their long tongues. But Jackie and Vi were most interested in the Queen herself.

Vi was a little disappointed. The Queen, to her eyes, was anything but a royal-looking person. To begin with, her head was so small: much smaller, even, than those of the workers; while her body was very long, fat, and pointed.

Jackie, too, was not impressed, and said so to Don Drone, who, however, checked him.

"Silence!" he thundered. "You have insulted me, but you will not be permitted to insult our Queen. Remember the fate of the snail, who was gummed up!"

Jackie was silent, accordingly.

"And now," said Nameless, "we must leave the workers to their task of building. I dare say, too," he added, with a twinkle in his eye, "Don Drone may want a rest, after the hard work he has done to-day. Farewell, good Don! We shall come again to visit you when the comb is complete."

Then Jackie, Vi, and Nameless made their way slowly out of the hive, after one last look at the motionless curtain of wax makers, and at the growing line of cells which the engineer sculptors were constructing.

After they had returned to the cedar tree, and had resumed their natural shapes, they asked their little friend when he would take them to visit the hive again.

"Well," said Nameless, "we had better wait a few days until the comb is finished and the regular work of the hive has begun. Come here in three days' time, and then we will go and see what progress has been made. But remember, above all things, to be good," and he was gone.





“Remember, above all things, to be good.”

## CHAPTER IV

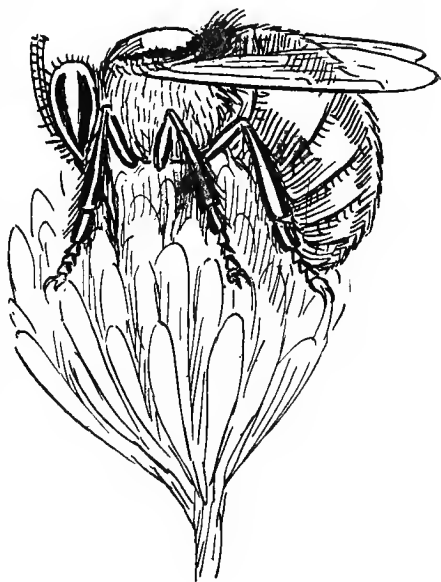
### THE BEE NURSERY AND STORE-HOUSE

PATIENCE, says the old proverb, is a virtue. If this be so, then, indeed, Jackie and Vi may be numbered among the most virtuous young folk who ever lived.

Jackie's lessons progressed apace, and Dr. Watts's platitudes regarding the bee were easily mastered. But, at the same time, Miss Forman was very uneasy. She found herself confronted by numberless questions on the subject of bees, which, for the moment, she was unable to answer, such subjects not falling altogether within the limits of her educational training.

As for the children, they were continually at the hive, speculating as to what was doing within its walls, and watching the coming and going of the bees. They were now proficient in distinguishing drones from workers, and many a fat drone was captured by the impetuous Jackie, in the hope that he might recognise his friend the Don and show him some hospitality at teatime in the shape of

raspberry jam. Sometimes they would listen for quite a long while to the dull hum which came from the hive, which they knew was the noise made by the ventilator bees who were keeping the hive cool.



They also watched the little workers rise from the hive with their wide, circular sweep, and then fly straight off to the gorse or violets or sweet lungwort, to gather in their store of honey ; but they also noticed that the bees were much more lively, and did not crawl back so heavily to the hive as on the first day.

At last the longed-for day arrived, and, with it, Nameless, whom they found, as usual, beneath the cedar tree ; and soon they were speeding away upon their little wings to see what new wonders the hive held in store for them.

At the doorway they found Don Drone gossiping with some of his brother aristocrats.

"Delighted and charmed," said he, "to see you all once again! Yes, things are going on very well—very well indeed. And, thank goodness," he added, with a sigh of satisfaction, "I am now getting my meals more regularly!"

After the Don had given the password to the sentinels, they entered the hive. But what a change since their last visit! When first they had passed the portal they had stood, as it were, beneath the dome of a huge, gloomy St. Paul's and looked upward into the darkness above, where they only saw the still, motionless curtain of waxmakers. Now, from the dome of the roof, there was a white and shining palace of wax hanging in mid-air, while other and similar palaces were slowly but surely growing up on either side; and behind these still unfurnished buildings hung the same motionless curtains of waxmakers.

But though all was bustle and activity around the new comb which was being built, there was still a little crowd on the completed portion of it, whose movements greatly interested Vi and Jackie.

"Hush!" said the Don. "Don't make any noise. Creep up gently, and you will see the Queen Mother."

In a moment they alighted on the beautiful

white wax, and crawling on their hands and knees, so to speak, reached the little crowd of maids of honour, who were bowing and walking backwards before the Queen.

"What's the matter?" asked Jackie.

"Matter?" replied the Don. "She is laying the foundation of our great empire. Come!" and passing the little band of bee courtiers, who were softly stroking the Queen Mother with their antennæ, they came to a little cell into which they peeped, and there beheld a tiny, ob-long, blue egg.



"Oh," said Vi,  
"what a pretty egg!"

"Yes," said the Don; "and from that egg will come another worker bee. See!" he continued, pointing to the Queen Mother.

Both children turned to look, and saw the Queen Mother carefully examine another cell, which her worker attendants had brushed and cleaned. She was evidently satisfied, for in it she deposited another little egg. Having done this, she again gave one final look to see that all was in order.

"Come, come!" said the Queen to her maids of honour; "we waste our time. To the next cell, to the next cell! Bid the workers hasten, that we may fill another and another comb with our eggs, for this must be the largest and best hive in the world!"

"You see," said Nameless, "what a time this is. The Queen is so busy laying eggs that the workers are barely able to furnish her with cells for them. Moreover, they have to lay in a stock of food for the children, who will soon begin to call for all the care of the bee nurses. Come and see the cells."

The Don began to yawn. "Bother the cells!" said he.

"No," said Vi, firmly. "I want to see them. And I am sure the Don, who has already been so kind to us, cannot refuse to tell us something about this wonderful palace of wax."

This little speech gratified the Don, who, like many idle folk, was very fond of flattery.

"Well, well," he replied; "come along!" and he led them to the top of the comb.

"I want you to notice," he said, "the form of the cells, or rooms, in our palace. They are all of the same shape, you see. All have six walls—except, of course, the Princess' chambers, which I will show you presently."

"What a funny shape to make your rooms!"

said Jackie. "Our nursery at home is square; and so are all our other rooms."

"Indeed!" replied the Don, in great surprise. "What a funny kind of hive you must live in. These fellows"—pointing to the workers who were building the comb on the other side of the "street"—"tell me that this shape is the best, because they can make bigger rooms, and more of them, than if they made them with four walls. Again, it's a great saving for the wax-makers."

"You must know," said Nameless, "that her Majesty wants to have the biggest hive in the world; and, to do so, she must have lots of room for the children."

"I see," said Jackie. "It's like my box of bricks. When I have been playing with them, I have to be very careful how I put them back into the box, because if I put them in anyhow, I can't get the cover to fit."

"Bravo!" cried Nameless. "Jackie is right, There, my young friend, at any rate you have learned one lesson to-day."

"But," inquired Vi, "although the little rooms all are the same shape, why are some larger than others?"

The Don beamed with delight, and his antennæ bristled with importance. "Those, my dear young lady," he replied, "are larger than the others, for a very good reason: they

are for a more important class of people. *Our* cells, in fact! And each of them is reserved for a baby drone," pointing proudly to the tiny blue eggs which rested in several of the larger cells.

"But the eggs are no bigger!" said Jackie.

"Wait and see!" was all the answer the Don vouchsafed.

But not all the cells were used as nurseries. Vi's attention was attracted to others.

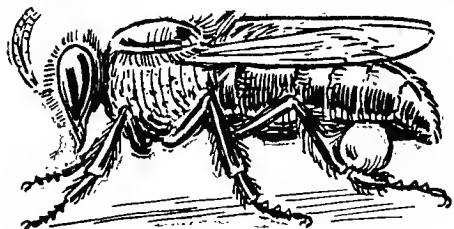
"What are those patches of colour?" said she. "How beautiful they are! See, some are red, others yellow, and mauve, and blue.

"That," replied the Don, "is food for the young children. It is the pollen which the workers collect from the flowers; if you wait a minute, I daresay you will see some of it brought in."

A few seconds more and up came a worker, who stopped at one of the half-filled pollen cells.

"Watch him closely," said Nameless.

They did so, and presently saw the bee begin, apparently, to scratch at his hind leg.





"What's the matter with him?" inquired Jackie. "Has he got nettle-rash?"

"Hush!" said Nameless; and, looking again, they saw on the hind knee of the worker a little ball of pollen resting in a tiny basket of hairs, which kept it from falling while he was flying about.

Carefully taking the ball of pollen dough from his basket, the worker put it into the cell; then, with his mouth and antennæ, he began to press and ram it in.

"Oh, what a long time it must take to collect," said Vi. "Such a lot is wanted to fill one cell!"

"Yes," replied Nameless. "Do you know that the worker you have just seen has visited more than a hundred flowers to gather that little ball; and besides that, has only secured one tiny drop of honey?"

"But there is no honey here at all," said Jackie.

"No," explained the Don. "That's kept in the other comb, in front. Come and see it. It's much more interesting—to me, at least;" from which it will be seen that the Don was rather a greedy person, and not unlike those little boys who are so fond of peeping into their mother's store-rooms.

They crept cautiously down the comb, where the Queen Mother was still busy, filling cell

after cell with her tiny blue eggs and eagerly calling to the workers to hasten the building of more cells for her use, and came to the store-house of the bees, which was situated in the front of the hive. Here, again, all the cells were of the same size and shape, though as yet but few were filled with the golden honey which was to feed the hive during the long cold winter; for the little bee-town was not yet built, and the workers were intent on the construction of nurseries, from which the future generation would be reared.

Among the upper store cells, however, there were some which had been filled with nectar from the early flowers of April and sealed with wax, so that the contents should not spoil.

As the children came down towards the patch of light at the entrance, where stood the ventilators and the Amazon guard, they saw the workers crowding in, saluting as they did so the watchful guardians of the hive, then hurrying up to deposit their tiny drops of honey in the store-house, and afterwards going on to the nursery with their baskets of pollen with which to feed the young brood when it came.

"Where do they carry the honey?" inquired Vi.

"And how is it," asked Jackie, "that it has

not made them sleepy, as it did the other day?"

"Oh," replied Nameless, "they don't swallow the honey when they gather it. They lick it up with their tongues, as you saw in the clover field; then it goes into a little bag in which they store it, and from which they pour it into the cells.

"I'm afraid I should make a mistake and swallow it!" said Jackie.

"If you did," said Vi, "you'd get sleepy, like the wax-makers over there, and simply hang up, as they do, and make wax all day, and never enjoy the garden, or flowers, or fresh air at all. I should hate to be a wax-maker. I should want to be a gatherer, and fly about outside all day."

"And get gobbled up by a bird at the finish," added the Don.

"Yes, or a lizard," retorted Jackie.

"True," said Vi. "I hadn't thought of that."

"Now, you're both quite wrong," said Nameless. "Like everything else in Bee Land, there is a rule which governs both workers and wax-makers. Only young bees are allowed to be wax-makers, because it is very exhausting work, and can only be undertaken by young and healthy workers."

"But," said Jackie, "I don't see anything very exhausting in having a good feed and

going to sleep for hours afterwards. Grand-papa does it every day”

“Wrong again, Jackie!” said Nameless. “You forget that while the bees are hanging like a curtain, making wax, the heat of of their crowded bodies is enormous. That is why they hang together as far as possible from the ventilators ; otherwise they would make no wax at all.”

“I understand,” replied Jackie. “It’s like going to church on Sunday morning, and having to come out because you feel hot and faint, ’cos there’s such a lot of people there.”

“And now,” said Nameless, “you mustn’t keep Miss Forman waiting for tea. I can see it’s nearly teatime by the way all the bees are coming home to bed.”

“Oh!” said Vi. “What is the bees’ bed-time?”

“They have no fixed hour,” replied the Don ; “they’re not important enough. No ; they have to work as long as they can. When the flowers begin to shut, then they come home to bed.”

“And if it’s a dull, foggy day?” inquired Jackie.

“They stay at home and work in the hive,” answered the Don.

“Come along!” said Nameless. “We mustn’t begin any more subjects this afternoon,

or you will be late for tea, and then you will not be allowed to go to the cedar tree, and we shall never have a chance of seeing the eggs when they are hatched. Besides, the next time you come, I am going to ask the Don to show you the chambers of the Princess bees."

On this they flew away; and you may be sure, with such a treat in store, that Jackie and Vi were not only in good time for tea, but had also washed their hands and faces till they shone again.

"What have you been doing with yourselves?" asked Miss Forman.

But Jackie and Vi were silent, for these excursions into Bee Land were their great secret.



## CHAPTER V

### THE HATCHING OF THE BROOD, AND THE PRINCESS' APARTMENTS.

JACKIE and Vi were in very low spirits. In their anxiety to be in time for tea, they had entirely forgotten to ask Nameless when he would next take them to pay a visit to the hive. Day after day they had gone to the cedar tree, but there was no sign of the little, round, smiling face peeping down at them from its heavy green branches.

To crown all, it was a wet day. Just such a day as sometimes occurs in April when the morning opens fair. Gradually the sky is overcast with clouds, which burst now and again in heavy showers ; in their turn giving place to brilliant sunshine, which lights up the freshness of the grass and flowers, and converts the drops lingering on the leaves and branches of the trees into a hundred glittering diamonds, until they fall gently with a brilliant flash, and are lost altogether in the ground below.

It was too bad.

“No cedar tree to-day,” said Miss Forman,

when they went out. "You must keep to the paths."

The children, therefore, wandered slowly and sadly on the gravel, wondering whether Nameless would be angry if they failed to visit the tree.

"You know," said Jackie, labouring in the pangs of temptation, "he may be there waiting for us. I'm sure we shouldn't get our feet a bit wet,"—a favourite excuse, this, with Jackie; one which had ended in many colds and much nitre.

Vi was more prudent; besides, her shoes were not quite so thick, nor so easy to remedy when wet, as Jackie's stouter little boots.

"I don't think Miss Forman would like it if we went, Jackie," she said. "We might get into a row, and then we shouldn't go to the hive again at all."

This prospect was too terrible to contemplate, and there was a silence, during which the demon of temptation assailed Jackie.

"Well," said he, "*I* might go, because I've got on my thick boots."

But Vi permitted him to run no risks, and stuck to her point with great resolution.

Imagine their joy, therefore, when they heard the well-known laugh of Nameless ringing out in peals behind them, and their delight

when they beheld his smiling countenance peeping at them from the depths of a prickly holly bush !

“ Good children ! ” said he. “ You shall have your reward in seeing what the hive is like on a showery day.”

Before long they were once more on their way to the hive, where, at the entrance, another surprise awaited them. Instead of the steady line of trim and tidy workers entering with their loads, they saw a curious, dusty-looking assemblage of toilers covered from head to foot with pollen.

“ Oh, Jackie ! ” said Vi. “ Why, you looked just like that on the first day we went flying, and you crept into the daffodil to escape the starling ! ”

Jackie was pleased. The remembrance of scrapes is always pleasant.

“ Yes,” said Nameless ; “ they can always gather more pollen on a wet day ; it sticks to their fur so well.”

On entering the hive they saw these “ dusty millers ” go straight to the “ brood house ” where the eggs were deposited, there to be met by other workers who brushed them down and removed the pollen from their hairy bodies, packing it away in the gaily-coloured pollen cells as a store for the young family which would so soon require feeding.



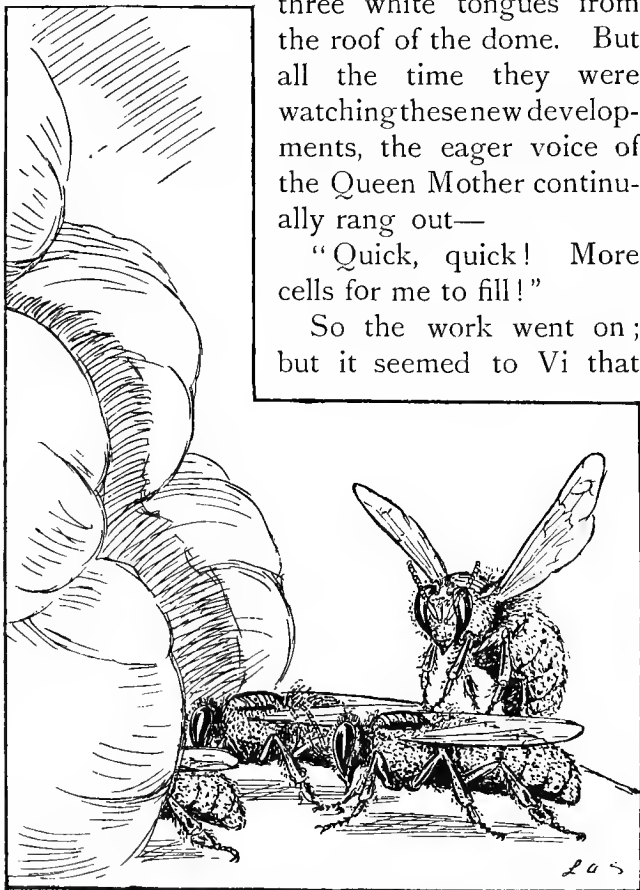


“They beheld his smiling countenance peeping at them from the depths of a prickly holly bush.”

Yet another wonder awaited them when they had finished looking at these little valets brushing off the pollen—and that was the growth of the waxen palace, which now hung down in three white tongues from the roof of the dome. But all the time they were watching these new developments, the eager voice of the Queen Mother continually rang out—

“Quick, quick! More cells for me to fill!”

So the work went on; but it seemed to Vi that



“They saw a curious dusty-looking assemblage of toilers.”

the workers were not so active as they were on the occasion of her last visit. She mentioned this to Nameless.

"You are quite right, Vi," he said, with a knowing smile. "I am glad to see how you have begun to notice all the habits of these little folk. They don't like wet or cold weather at all : it seems to make them sleepy and lazy ; while fine, bright, warm weather makes them very brisk and lively."

"How funny!" said Jackie. "It's just the reverse with us. We are lively and run about in the brisk, cold weather, and feel sleepy on warm, hot days."

"That's because you are stupid," said a sulky voice, as the Don joined them, looking very sulky. "Now our way is the best, because in the cold weather we go to sleep, and don't want to eat so much. We only wake up in the warm, bright spring and summer, when there is plenty of honey."

"Well, you needn't be cross about it, and call us stupid," said Jackie.

"Now, Jackie," Nameless remonstrated ; "remember it is a wet day, and the poor Don has not been able to go out. Think ! Are you not impatient sometimes, when it is wet and you have to stay in the school-room ?"

The Don gave a big buzz of satisfaction.

He felt that Nameless had given Jackie a home-thrust.

Jackie thought it high time to change the subject of conversation. "Please show us where the Princess bees will live," he requested. "You promised you would, the last time we came out."

"Come along, then," said the Don, and they moved back to the brood cells, pushing their way through the crowd, for many bees had come in early, and the Don's companions, being large and heavy, took up a lot of room on a wet day, when they could not go out for a fly.

At length, by dint of elbowing and pushing, they managed to make their way to the brood cells at the back, where the Queen Mother, with her band of attendants, was still feverishly passing from one cell to another, crying out for yet more accommodation for her unlimited family. They also noticed that there was a certain amount of anxiety on the part of some workers who were busy peering in at the eggs that lay at the bottom of the cells.

"Now," said Jackie triumphantly, "as you are continually telling me that the bees are never idle and always working, perhaps you will say what these are doing here? They are neither wax-makers, nor architects, nor ventilators, nor gatherers, nor maids of honour,

nor sweepers!" and Jackie felt that he had scored a point.

Nameless was delighted, and almost fell off the comb with laughter.

"Jackie, Jackie!" he gasped. "Why will you jump to conclusions? A bee never goes anywhere, or does anything, without a purpose. The bees that you see are nurses. They have just come up, because they received a warning that the eggs were going to hatch, and they are here in readiness to feed the young larvæ,

or grubs, as you would call them. Look!"

and he pointed to a cell, which contained one of the tiny eggs, from which a small black head had just made its way through the shell. This was followed by a little white, transparent body, which twisted and wriggled about in a



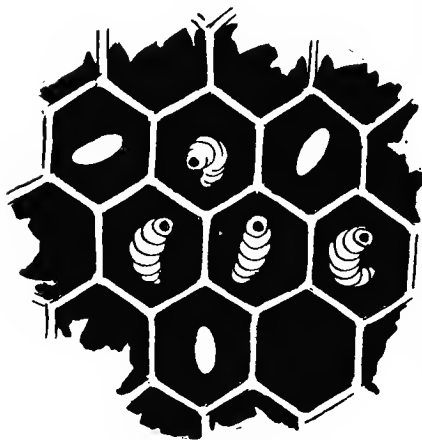
most alarming manner. "Ugh!" was Vi's verdict on the new arrival; "it's not a bit pretty! I thought it would be like a little chicken, all fluffy and soft!"

"Wait and see," said the Don.

"Why does he always say 'wait and see' when we ask him any questions?" said Vi to Nameless.

Nameless drew her aside and explained: "You see, my dear, the Don and his companions don't live very long. In fact," he added in a pained voice, "they always die at the end of the summer. But I can't tell you about that now; you will learn it quite soon enough. As a matter of fact, the Don himself is only a few weeks old, and knows very little about the hive; so, like many other folks who pretend to

know a lot, he gives you the most sensible answer he can. But you mustn't despise the baby larvæ!" he concluded, as they returned to the brood cells, where the excitement was fast and furious.



One after another the eggs were cracking and revealing their baby grubs.

"They will soon grow into bees," Nameless continued. "In fact, in a week you will find



"Stroked his beautiful, shining wings."

them all busy, turning into their little cocoons."

"What are they?" inquired Jackie. "Though I suppose they are something like the cocoons my silk-worms made."

Vi was astonished. "I didn't know bees

were like silk-worms!" she said. "Anyhow, silk-worms don't sting!" and then she remembered how tender the Don was on this particular subject.

The latter's eyes simply glittered with rage.

"You're no better than your brother!" he stuttered, in a voice choking with indignation. "I did hope that you, at least, had some regard for the feelings of others!"

Poor little Vi was very penitent. She went at once to her ruffled friend and stroked his beautiful, shining wings.

"Oh, I am so sorry!" she said—and she really meant it. "But I forgot for the moment what I was saying. Do forgive me, dear Don Drone! I won't do it again!"

Now the Don was really not a bad-hearted sort of drone. Like most easy-going people, he was easily offended, but always ready to be friends. So he stroked Vi's little curls with his antennæ, as he replied—

"Well, well! Of course you didn't mean it. I can't be angry, can I?" And they were on good terms again.

They now turned once more to see the larvæ, most of whom were by this time free from their shells and lying with their little black heads stretched out, waiting for their first meal of pollen or "bee-bread," as it is called. This the nurses were busily engaged



in bringing, mixing it with honey just in the right proportions; for the nurse bees, like all good nurses, take care that their little charges don't eat too much, or anything that will make them ill. As for the grubs, they set to work with a will, and soon finished up all that was given them.

"They like that better than some young folks like rice pudding," said Nameless to Jackie.

This being a painful subject, Jackie, as usual, changed it for a more congenial topic.

"What about the Princess bees?" he enquired. "Are we going to see their rooms?"

"Of course," said the Don, who was just a little jealous of the attention which was being shown to the young grubs. "If you look over there you will see one," he continued, pointing to a curious lump which seemed to rise out of the even surface of the comb.

Jackie and Vi at once hastened to see this new wonder in Hiveland.

"It doesn't look so pretty as the others," said Vi.

"What a lot of wax they have used in making it," said Jackie.

It was, indeed, a strange-looking cell—something like an acorn in shape.

"What are the royal eggs like?" asked Vi, who fancied that the Queen's egg would be

something very different from that of an ordinary worker or a drone.

"Look and see!" said the Don; and both peeped in eagerly, expecting something quite wonderful.

"Why, it's like the others!" exclaimed Jackie, in disgust, as if this was a personal injury. "I don't believe it is a Queen egg at all."

"Hush, hush!" said the Don, in an anxious voice. "You mustn't talk so loud. If her Majesty were to hear that this is a royal cell, she would at once destroy the egg."

"But can't she see that it is?" asked Vi.

"No, no," replied the Don. "She's too busy now to notice. But she will learn soon enough!" he added, with a sigh and a furtive look at the Queen, who was calling for more and more cells to be made for the brood.

"I don't understand," said Vi. "I should have thought she would have been glad to have a little baby Princess bee to play with!"

"Oh, no!" returned Nameless. "You can't think how jealous she is, even of her own children! That is another of the things you will learn when you come again. I think we have now seen quite enough for to-day; so say good afternoon to the Don, for, by the way the workers are crowding in, I fancy there is going to be another heavy storm, and you must get home before it begins."



“Sprang into the holly bush.”

"Don't forget, Nameless," commanded Jackie, as they flew along the path, "to tell us when you are going to take us out again. You forgot, when we saw you last, and it was hard to be good; 'cos I didn't know when you would take us to see the hive!"

"Very well," Nameless replied. "We will give the little grubs time to grow up and turn into their cocoons, and then I promise you a great treat, for the hive will be well started, and there will be lots for you to see."

"How long will that be?" demanded Vi.

"Well," replied Nameless; "it will take quite six days before the grub turns into its cocoon, and then another six days before it is ready to come out as a bee. So, twelve days from now——"

"Oh, dear! What a long time!" said Jackie, who was rather impatient.

"Well, Rome wasn't built in a day, was it? I know some young men who couldn't learn their weights and measures tables in twelve days," replied Nameless, meaningly.

They now alighted on the path, where their little friend again changed them back to their natural size, and with a final wave of his hand, sprang into the holly bush.

"Good gracious, children, wherever did you spring from?" said Miss Forman, who was walking along the gravel. "I've been looking

for you everywhere, to tell you that you are going up to London to stay with your cousins for the next ten days. Won't that be nice?"

"Lovely!" replied Jackie. "We shan't have any lessons, and I shan't have to be so very good——"

"Oh, yes, you must," said Miss Forman. "It is because you have been so good that your mother is going to take you with her."

"Besides," said Vi, "it will just fill up the time; won't it, Jackie?"

"So it will. And, Vi, it will be splendid when we come back!"

So saying, they hurried off to pack up some of the particular treasures they wanted to show to their cousins in London.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE BEE BABIES

NOTHING could have been more fortunate than the invitation which had arrived for Jackie and Vi to spend a few days in London. Otherwise, it is to be feared that their goodness would hardly have stood the test of twelve days, during which they would have seen the hive constantly before them, without being able to continue their investigations into the manners and customs of its little inhabitants.

On their return from London they quickly ran to have a look at it, and found things outwardly much as when they left. The same little ventilators, the same Amazons, the same crowd of workers going in and out, the same buzz from inside, which they now knew was the noise of the ventilators, who were pumping fresh air into the streets between the rows of cells.

"Oh," said Jackie, "I do wish it was afternoon!"

"So do I," his sister agreed. "And I hope Nameless has not forgotten. Twelve days is a long time, you know. He may have seen us go away, and, perhaps, thinking we were never coming back, has gone off to some other children."

"It would be horrid of him if he did!" returned Jackie. "He promised, you know; and nobody ever breaks a promise."

"We'll send him a note," said Vi, emphatically; "just to say we have come home."

"Where to?" enquired Jackie, who was not fond of writing notes.

"We'll leave it in the cedar tree," replied Vi; "he's sure to find it there." So they both went up to the schoolroom.

Jackie was only too glad when Vi undertook to write the note. She brought out her little desk—a new one, bought at the Stores in London—and drawing forth a clean sheet of note-paper, began—

"DEER NAMELESS,

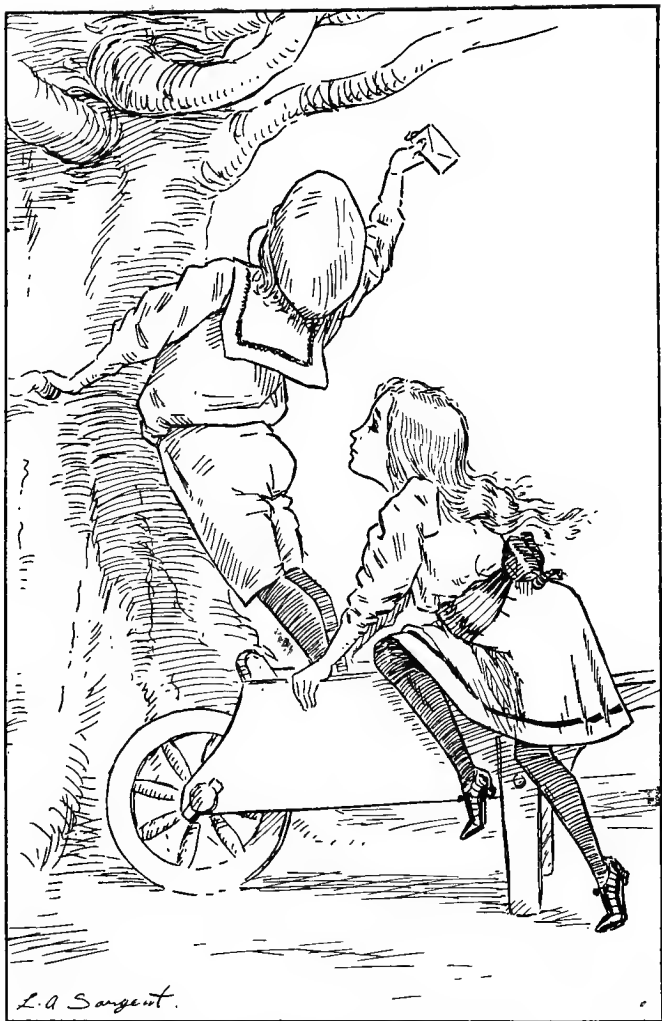
"I hope you are very wel. We have just come back from Lundun. Do come and see us as yew said yew wood to-day at the seeder tree.

"Your loving

"VI."

Jackie added his name to this epistle, pausing, however, to remark—

"I say, Vi, won't he be cross? You've



"By dint of standing in the gardener's wheelbarrow he was able to throw the note into the branches."



written it in pencil. You know that grown-up folks always write in ink."

"Well, I'll just put a line at the end, the same as mother often does," said Vi, and added—

"P. S.—Pleas excuse pensil. We maint use ink, becose of our fingers and pinnyfours."

"There!" she exclaimed, triumphantly, as she folded and placed it in an envelope. "How shall we address it?"

"I know," said Jackie, much relieved that the writing was nearly over — "'Nameless, care of the Cedar Tree.'"

"Capital!" said Vi, who addressed the envelope accordingly, in her own peculiar spelling.

"And now," said Jackie, "I'll post it;" and off they ran to the tree, where, by dint of standing in the gardener's wheelbarrow, he was able to throw the note into the branches, where it remained.

"I wonder if he will send an answer?" said Vi.

"He ought to," replied Jackie. "We always have to answer the notes that come for us, worse luck! Hullo! What's that?" he continued, as something hit him on the nose and then fell to the ground.

They both stooped to see, and found a

dainty little three-cornered note, written on the bark of the silver birch, addressed to Jackie and Vi.

"Here, Vi, you read it," said Jackie.

Vi opened the note, and read—

"Dearest Jackie, dearest Vi,  
I will meet you by-and-bye.  
Nameless sends his greeting true ;  
Be sure and come at half-past two."

"Hurrah!" cried Jackie. "He's an old brick!" and they both ran off to wash their hands and faces, as it was nearly dinner-time.

At half-past two they hurried back to the tree, and found their little friend climbing down from the overhanging branches just as they got there. He was delighted to see them.

"Welcome home again, my dears," said he. "I hope you enjoyed your visit to London."

"Oh, yes," replied Vi. "But, please, we do *so* want to see the bees!"

"Then you've not forgotten them?" enquired Nameless, with a merry twinkle in his eye.

"Oh, no!" said both children.

"Very well. Then off we go again!" and soon they found themselves once more on the threshold of the hive, where their old friend the Don was waiting for them.

"Upon my word," said he, "I'm very glad



"Climbing down from the overhanging branches."

to see you all again ! There's a lot going on this afternoon. They were making such a fuss indoors that I was obliged to come out, to get away from all the noise and bustle. You know how I hate it ! However, as you are interested, I will show you round. I fancy you will be surprised," and giving his salute to the sentry, they passed inside the hive.

Jackie and Vi were quite astonished. The combs had grown so much while they were in London that there seemed hardly room to move about, while every worker they met seemed to be swelling with importance.

Gradually they made their way along the gleaming white waxen streets, until they came to the back of the hive, where they had previously seen the little white grubs emerge from the eggs. Round these an eager crowd of nurses was gathered, anxiously listening, and signalling to each other with their antennæ.

"Why," remarked Jackie, "they have closed all the little cells !"

And so they had. All the brood cells were now closed with a filmy door of wax, behind which the baby bees could be heard buzzing gently as they struggled to free themselves from their cocoons. Presently the nurses began to break down one of the white doors, carefully spreading the wax on either side, and a little grey bee slowly emerged.

"Oh, what a dear little thing!" said Vi. "What a funny colour it is! Not a bit like the other workers, who are of a beautiful brown."

"Wait and see!" said the Don, prophetically.

"What a fuss they are making over it! Like a lot of girls round a baby!" said Jackie, scornfully.

Indeed, he was right, for the nurses had crowded round the little creature, and were stroking it with their antennæ, brushing and washing it, while others were offering it honey on their long tongues.

"That's because they are glad to see it!" said Nameless; "for you must remember that every new worker in the hive means more honey for the winter store. But, see; this is not the only baby that has found its way out of the cells," and looking down the long street, they saw at almost every door little groups of nurses either breaking the waxen seals, or crowding round some newly hatched worker, caressing and feeding it, until the whole passage was thronged with eager clusters of joyful bees.

"Why are they not watching the drone cells?" asked Vi. "Are there going to be no little drone babies to-day?"

The Don was hugely pleased. "No, no, young lady," said he, with his most courtly bow. "We of the upper classes do not con-

descend to make our appearance, like common workers, in so short a time as twenty-one days ; nor are there so many of us. It takes fully twenty-five days for the drone baby to grow up and arrive at his full glory ; but wait and see !” and he flourished his antennæ.

The sweeper gang now came up in a great hurry, and began to brush and clean out the little rooms, in order that the Queen Mother might lay more eggs in them. Some brushed out the cells, while others seized the empty cocoons, and hurried away with them to the door of the hive, whence they were flung outside.

Vi was enchanted with the dear little grey bees. “What do they do now ?” said she, after having seen them well fed with honey.

“To-morrow,” Nameless replied, “they will begin their work, and the first thing they will learn will be to act as nurses to the others, who will be hatched out by that time. In that way, you see, there will be more workers to gather honey.”

“Thank goodness !” ejaculated the Don. “There will be some chance of getting a decent meal once more !”

“You’re always thinking of eating !” retorted Jackie.

“What else is there to think of, I should like to know ?” replied the Don.

"But," said Vi, "will these little babies, when they grow up, always remain nurses?"

"Oh, no," said Nameless. "They will stay in the hive for some days, till they are quite strong, and then go out to feed up on the honey in the flowers, and afterwards become waxmakers, or ventilators, or amazons, or join the sweeper gang."

And always above the bustle and hum of the newly hatched bees arose the cry of the Queen Mother—

"Quick, quick! More cells, more cells for me to fill!"

"What!" inquired Jackie in amazed wonder. "Is the Queen going to lay any more eggs?"

"Oh, yes!" replied Nameless. "The hive will go on growing. It always does. For every bee that is here now, there will, I suppose, be forty or fifty by the time summer is over."

Jackie looked astonished. "But there will be no room for them!" he said.

The Don smiled. "Wait and see," he chuckled. "I fancy we shall be able to manage quite well."

"But won't the hive get too full?" persisted Jackie.

"That's a sensible question," replied Nameless. "And now I'm going to ask you another: How many bees do you suppose you could put into a pint pot?"

"I don't know," answered Jackie. "But I know what a pint is, because we have a pint of milk for lunch at eleven o'clock every day, and when it is poured out it fills two tumblers—one for each of us."

"Very well, Jackie," persisted Nameless; "and how many bees do you think you could put into a tumbler?"

"I give it up!" said Jackie.

"Then I will tell you," replied the little man. "You can easily put one thousand bees inside a tumbler, and even then it will not be quite full. Now, there are about a thousand bees in this hive, so you could put the whole of the hive into a single tumbler. But it will surprise you to know that by the end of the season you would want fifty or, perhaps, sixty tumblers to hold the whole brood of this one hive."

"Think of that!" exclaimed the Don, in great pride.

"Well, anyway, Don, you wouldn't like to be put into a tumbler with a lot of other bees! You'd get nicely squeezed! Why, if you were at the bottom of it, you would be squashed to death!" said the irrepressible Jackie.

The Don looked at him for a moment. "Now, you are rude!" he said, loftily. "I don't like my form to be made a subject for



unseemly jokes!" and he withdrew, rather offended.

"Stop, Don!" said Nameless. "As usual, Jackie has made another mistake. Oh, Jackie, Jackie, you are always wrong! Bees are not at all heavy. Do you know that three hundred bees barely weigh as much as two pennies?"

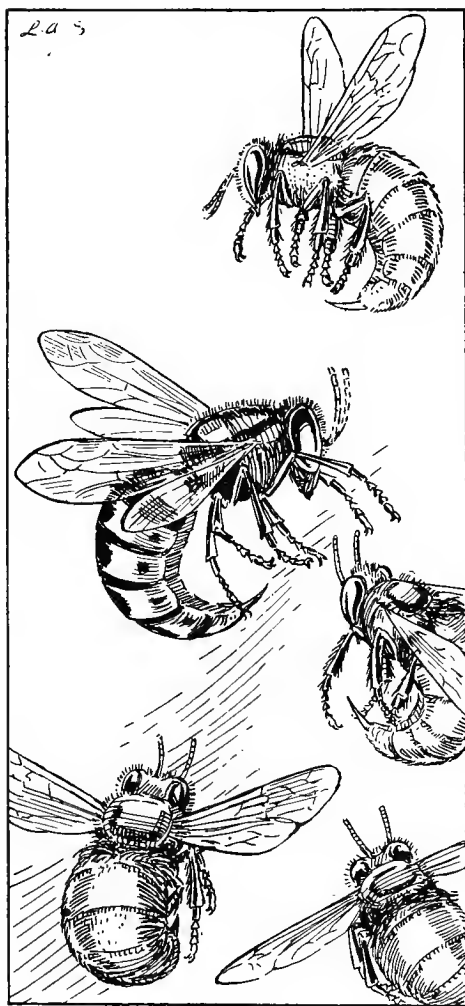
"Oh, dear!" said Vi. "It does seem wonderful! But please tell me, Don Drone, how many drones there are in this hive? Are there as many of you as there are of the workers?"

The Don's ruffled plumes straightened out; he liked people to talk about him.

"Oh, no, my dear young lady!" he answered. "We are not half so common as the mere workers. We only number about thirty in the hive at present; and even when the young ones are hatched," he added, with an admiring glance at the cells above, "I doubt if there will be more than a thousand of us."

Jackie and Vi thought it just as well that there should not be more drones in the hive than there were; for, from what they had seen of their friend, they guessed that, although the drones did not contribute at all to the store of the hive, they were very greedy, and each ate up in one day as much as any six of the little workers brought home.

At this moment they heard a great commotion at the entrance of the hive.



"The wasp was very large, and his long, deadly sting, unsheathed, was turning in every direction."

"Come on!" said Nameless. "A robber is trying to force his way in."

They hurried down to the door, where they saw the Amazon sentinels making eager signals to some of the workers who were just going out, while others were contending with a large wasp, who had tried to creep in unawares and steal the honey.

There was a terrible struggle, for

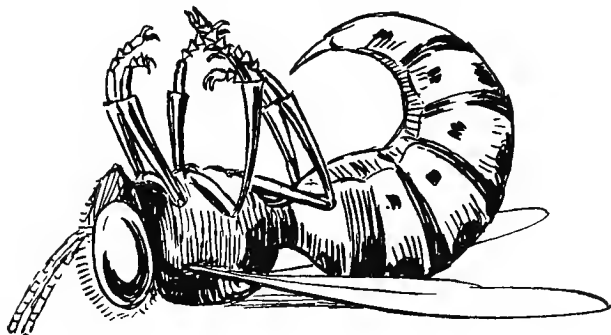
the wasp was very large, and his long deadly sting, unsheathed, was turning in every direction, ready to be plunged into the bodies of his assailants. He was eventually outnumbered, and a sharp thrust from one of the Amazons laid him lifeless on the ground, his eyes rolling in agony and his sting still viciously thrusting at his enemies.

"Poor wasp!" said Vi. "I can't help feeling sorry for him."

"Why?" asked Nameless. "He is only a robber; and the bees are most careful to defend their hives from such as he. You will always find that amongst industrious and hard-working people there are many lazy, good-for-nothing scamps who try to steal their well-earned store. And even human beings like honey for breakfast," he added, with a twinkle in his eye.

"But not with powders in it!" said Jackie, who could never forget that incident in his life.

"Never mind the powders, Jackie," said Nameless. "We must be going."



## CHAPTER VII

### THE RIVAL QUEENS

TO Jackie's great satisfaction, the excursions to the hive now became more regular. Hardly a day passed without a visit to their friend the Don, whose importance seemed to grow in proportion to that of the brood.

Indeed, it was quite wonderful to see the grey workers daily emerge from their waxen seclusion and, after their first feed of honey, set about the humble duties of nursing, under the guidance and instruction of their elders.

Both children had the satisfaction of being present at the opening of the drone cells when the young drones made their first appearance. This event was a source of great joy and pride, not only to the Don, but also to his companions, who buzzed about the cells where the drone-babies were, and, for indolent folk, showed quite a respectable amount of enthusiasm; in fact, all was life, peace, and animation until important events happened which soon altered the complexion of affairs in Hiveland.

One day, as the children were on the point of taking their place in the long line of bees who were entering the hive—for the workers had now largely increased in numbers, owing to the hundreds who were being hatched from the cells—Vi suddenly stopped and called to Jackie.

“Look, look!” she said. “There are a lot



The dead bees.

of dead bees on the ground. Oh, I do hope they have not been fighting!”

“So there are,” said Jackie. “Look, Nameless! Why are all those bees lying dead? Have they been taken ill?”

Little Nameless shook his head sadly. “No,” he replied, “they’ve not been fighting, and there is no sickness. Those poor little bees have

died from cold and exposure. They must have returned late last night, and found the hive so full that they couldn't get in at the door, and so had to spend the whole night outside. As I have already told you, their delicate bodies are very sensitive to cold and wet, and they died, simply because there was no room for them in the hive."

"Poor little things!" said Vi, who was very fond of animals, and could not bear to hear of their sufferings.

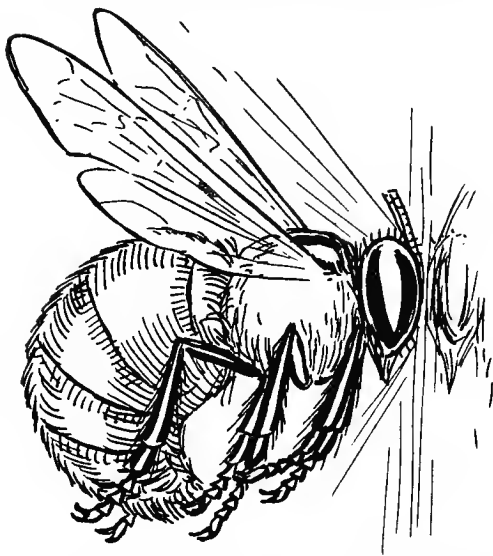
"Then why don't they go to another hive, where there is more room for them?" objected Jackie. "There are plenty at the farm across the road, where this swarm came from."

"You forget, Jackie," said Nameless, "that they couldn't do that, because bees are very particular and will not, under any circumstances, allow a stranger-bee to come into their hive. That is why the Amazons stand at the door—to turn away those who do not belong to the swarm and kill them, as they did the wasp, if they manage to enter at all."

"Well, what are they going to do, then?" continued Jackie, who thought he had at last hit upon a question which would puzzle his little guide. "The Queen goes on laying eggs, and every day a whole lot of bees are hatched, and yet there is no room for them. She might just as well leave off laying altogether."

"Now that is just where you are wrong, Jackie," said Nameless. "The bees know quite well what to do. As our friend the Don says, 'Wait and see.'"

"Oh, dear," said Vi; "what a long time it takes to get into the hive! We shall not be able to see anything when we are there unless we make haste."



At this moment they were joined by the Don, who had just returned from what he called his constitutional, which consisted of a quiet fly round the most sunny

parts of the garden and the greenhouse, where there would be as few birds as possible.

"Had a charming fly," said he, joining them. "Been in the greenhouse all the afternoon. It's beautifully warm there, with no birds to bother one, though the glass is very confusing. You think you are going to fly right out,

when, instead of doing so, you run your head against a hard pane, which makes you see stars or fireflies, and gives you a *pane* of another sort. I can't get to understand it at all," and he rubbed his nose thoughtfully at the remembrance.

At length they were able to squeeze in at the door, but matters seemed to be even worse inside. The crowd was dense, and the heat from their small bodies went far to make the hive what Vi had once called "stuffy." The ventilator gangs had been doubled, but could hardly find room to work their wings. On looking round, the children were struck by the number of young bees who were at work; some quite grey, others just losing their colour; while some—of a beautiful rich brown—were just setting off on their first flight in search of honey. Nameless pointed this out to the children.

"But," said Vi, "do the young bees know where to go? How do they manage if they have never been out before?"

"That's quite easy," replied the Don, delighted to find a question that he could answer. "Nearly every morning the scouts—as you would call them—go out and fly round the garden, to see what flowers are open. Then they come back to the hive with the news, and all set out, the young bees following the



older ones ; and, once they have learnt their way, they never forget."

"You see," added Nameless, "they are very careful to remember their lessons."

"Bother lessons!" said Jackie. "Let's talk about something else. Why does——" he was beginning, when a shrill, piping sound rang through the hive.

In an instant all was still. The bees remained motionless, their antennæ alone waving in uncertainty.

Jackie and Vi were frightened at the weird, yet plaintive, cry. Once more through the stillness of the hive rang out the same imploring call. This time there could be no mistake, and the black, densely-crowded mass of bees began to move in the direction whence it came. The children were carried away by the force of the rush, and, with them, Don Drone and Nameless. On and on they were borne, till at last the crowd stopped ; but others still pushed behind and added to the throng.

Another cry now broke upon the stillness of the hive, but this time how different ! Instead of a low, plaintive appeal for help, it was a bold shriek of rage and defiance. It was horrible !

"Oh," said Vi, "I am so frightened ! Do tell me, dear Don, what is the matter. Is there any danger?"

The Don smiled. "No, my dear young lady, there is none for you. But," he added gravely, "I fear there is for the Princess."

Once more they heard the cry; this time low and sweet, as before.

"There!" said the Don. "The first of the young Queens has burst her cocoon and is calling for the nurses to release her."

"Well, why don't they?" Jackie enquired. "They were quick enough when the workers and drones wanted to come out."

But, as he spoke, another terrible shriek behind him caused both the startled children to turn, when they saw the Queen Mother, her eyes blazing with hate and rage, her antennæ erect with passion, and her sting viciously protruding from her huge, bloated body. They shrank back in terror, for the Queen Mother in her wrath was a sight to dismay even the bravest, and words cannot express the awful cruelty that lurked within her sting.

The children had seen the stings of the workers before, when the snail and the wasp had been executed, and Jackie had, to his cost, discovered what terrible weapons they were. But, compared with the sting of the Royal Mother, the lesser arms of the workers shrank into insignificance.

It was not a simple, straight sword that they

saw, but the deadly curved scimitar of some Arab chief, and its message was death.

"Oh, dear!" said Vi. "Let us go away. I don't like this at all. If she should see us, I know she would want to kill us."

The Don laughed. "Have no fear!" said he. "There will be no harm done. The workers have had time to provide against it."

The Queen Mother would not be pacified by her maids of honour; for the moment she even forgot the cells and the broods.

"Who is it," she shrieked, "that dares to raise a voice in command, in the hive where I, alone, am Queen? What Queen has the audacity to venture where I am sole ruler? I must and will see her, and punish her as she deserves! Death! death! and death alone to the one who disputes my will! Let her come out, I say, and face me! Let her come out and meet me in open fight!"

Again the plaintive cry of the imprisoned Queen besought the workers to release her.

"But, see," said Vi, "they are going to let the young Queen out! Oh, do stop them! I know the Queen Mother will kill her!"

Nameless reassured her. "No, no; it is quite safe. See; the workers are protecting the coming Sovereign."

They now saw some of the wax-makers

slowly detach themselves from the curtain, and begin to heap up wax before the door of the royal cell, while the architect directed others to plaster more over the entrance, so that the Queen Mother might not be able to pierce it with her sting, and thus murder her infant daughter.

"But," said Vi, "the poor young Queen inside will starve to death!"

"Oh, no, she won't," said the Don. "You may see where the architect has left a little hole in the door, through which she can thrust her tongue."

They watched, and saw the long tongue of the young Queen slowly pass through the opening. Instantly several of the workers who had just returned began to pour their honey upon it.

"But I will!" shrieked the infuriated Queen Mother, breaking away from her attendants. "I *will* destroy this Queen who dares to be my rival!" and she rushed wildly towards the royal cell.

Jackie and Vi held their breath, for they knew how the bees respected their Queen; they feared she might even break down the waxen door, so furious was her passion.

The bees hesitated. They hardly dared to touch the Mother of the hive. This uncertainty was but for a moment. By common

consent they threw themselves upon the Queen and beat her off, taking care, however, not to injure her. Again and again did the imprisoned Queen beg to be released, and again and again did the Mother Queen hurl defiance at her and rush to the cell, ready to massacre her own child with her cruel sting; while again and again she was gently beaten back.

"Oh," said Vi, "how hot it is in here! I can hardly breathe."

"Yes," replied Nameless; "it is rather hot, in more senses than one!"

"Right!" said the Don. "This lamentable incident has upset the hive, and can only have one end."

"And that," said Jackie, "is a fight, I suppose?" He was a great advocate of forcible methods.

"Oh, no," replied Nameless. "Not at all. It will mean a new swarm. The Queen Mother will go off and found a new hive elsewhere."

"What!" said Vi. "After all the pains she has taken to make this one so nice? That does seem hard!"

"Not at all," returned the Don. "Queens are, of course, to be respected, but they must not be allowed to have all their own way. They must first consider the good of the hive, and their own wishes afterwards. There

are too many of us here as it is, and it will do no harm if some go away and leave the others a little more room. Bother! How hot it is!"

"Do let us go," entreated Vi. "I can't stand it any longer!" for she was feeling quite faint from the heat.

They turned to leave. But what a change had come over the hive whilst they had been watching the attempts of the Queen Mother to destroy her daughter! In place of a busy, toiling throng of workers, they saw an excited idle crowd, which seemed to be divided in its opinions. Even the ventilators had ceased to work. Only the nurses continued the task of caring for the ceaseless throng of young which constantly appeared to stream out of the little cells.

Loud above the murmurs of the surging crowd rose the cries of the rival Queens, which seemed still further to excite the workers, and disturb the hitherto harmonious working of the hive. The Queen's delirium seemed infectious: the workers caught her frenzy, and grew impatient of the rival voices.

"Come away," said Nameless, "and to-morrow you will doubtless see a grand sight. But, stay! I think the Queen Mother is speaking."

They listened, and through the hive came

the voice of the Queen Mother addressing her subjects in a shrill, harsh tone—

“My people : Listen to my words, and ponder well what I shall say ! You are my children, and I am your mother. Some of you followed me to this hive ; others have been born within its walls. You have always obeyed and respected me, and now the hive is well filled and prosperous. Remember that I founded my empire in poverty and uncertainty. The hive was empty : now it is full ; and in its fulness lies the danger. Those that love me will follow me. Those who do not are no children of mine, nor shall they ever darken the doors of my home again.

“To-morrow I leave ; once more to live in poverty, to build anew a hive as great and prosperous as this. As for her who will usurp my place and claim the obedience of my children who yet lie, shrouded, in their cells, let her beware ! My fate will be her own, and she in turn will be an outcast from the hive she has ruled. Courage, then, my children ! To-morrow will see the foundation of a new city, to which we will go, not in sorrow or despair, but in the joyful hope of raising up an even greater and yet more prosperous empire !”

“There,” said Nameless, “that settles it ! They swarm to-morrow, and I advise you both to see them start. I daresay your father

will place another hive in readiness, and then you will have all the more chance of getting honey for your breakfast—and your powders.”

Vi was quite glad again to breathe the cool outside air.

“Oh,” she cried, “how horrid it all seems! Just as things were going on so nicely!”

But Nameless only muttered: “Wait and see.”





## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SWARM

JACKIE and Vi were, as a rule, early risers, but, on the day following the events recorded in the last chapter, they were up and in the garden even earlier than usual, standing at the hive, and debating as to when the momentous swarm would leave its quarters.

"I hope it won't be during school time," said Jackie.

"So do I," assented Vi. "Couldn't we persuade Miss Forman to give us lessons under the cedar tree? She would then let us run away to see the swarm. P'r'aps she might like to do so herself."

"I know what we'll do!" exclaimed Jackie. "We'll talk about it at breakfast, and get father to say we may go. But, I say, Vi! Look at the bees: they're not going to any of the flowers to-day. Do you see?"

Jackie was right. The bees seemed determined to take a holiday, and flew lazily in circles round the hive, instead of hastening



“The bees seemed determined to take a holiday, and flew lazily in circles round the hive.”

about their usual duties. Just then old Charles, the gardener, came up and touched his forelock to the children.

“Marnin, Miss Vilet. Marnin, Mas’r Jackie,” he said. “Yew dew be up urly s’marnin ; ay, that yew be ; an’ a-lookin’ at they beeses, tew. Yew be vur ever at that, vur zartin.”

“Oh !” said Jackie, “I know something that you don’t. They’re going to swarm to-day,” and he nodded his head with a superior sense of his own better information.

Old Charles paused and gazed attentively from under his bushy eyebrows at the hive, then looked around the garden, at the sky, and back again at the hive. Stooping down, he anxiously examined the dead bees who had been crowded out on the previous night.

“Well I never !” he ejaculated, eyeing Jackie with great satisfaction. “Yew du take notice ! Zure ’nough they be. Zoon, tew, I shud say. I fare for tew zay so tew master, though. Oi’ll get another hive like thick ’un vur to catch ’em in. Ay, an’ pots an’ kettles, tew, vur to make bee-music. I never did zee the likes of thick young master ; he dew take notice !” and off he went, muttering to himself.

“Splendid, Vi !” said Jackie, clapping his hands. “Charles will go and tell father, and he will get a hive, and we shall keep the swarm

here. Besides, we *must* see it now ; and you shall beat a kettle, and so will I !”

Here the breakfast bell rang, and both knew very well that punctuality was the first thing to be considered, if they were to enjoy the unspeakable delight of watching the swarm.

Now Jackie's father was a very sensible man who, though he believed in lessons and books, knew also of one book, open for all to read, which was, as a rule, passed over in the ordinary education of the day—the Great Book of Nature. Consequently, when Jackie announced at breakfast that there was to be a swarm, he looked up with great interest at his little son, pleased to find him so keenly alive to the habits of the insects around him.

“I don't know what has come over the children!” said Miss Forman. “They seem to think and talk of nothing but bees.”

Jackie's father seemed even more delighted.

“How do you know they are going to swarm?” he asked, with a view to find if Jackie's statement was a mere guess.

Jackie and Vi had determined to keep secret their visits with Nameless to the hive, because they were, as children often are, afraid of being laughed at by their elders ; so Jackie knit his brows and thought deeply how he should answer the question.

“Why,” he exclaimed at length, “because

there are too many bees in the hive already. They can't get in at night, and there are hundreds dead outside this morning. Then, you know," he went on, forgetting all caution, "the two Queens will quarrel, and one must go away, or else they will fight."

Jackie's father was still more interested, and said—

"You are quite right, my boy, and I am pleased to see that you take such an interest in what goes on around you. Since you have been the first to tell me about it, you shall, if you are good, come and see the swarm. I daresay Miss Forman will give you a holiday."

Jackie's eyes glistened. This was more than he had counted upon.

"Mayn't I come too?" said poor little Vi, who felt, perhaps, that the treat was only intended for Jackie. "I know all about the Queens fighting, just as much as Jackie does."

"Well, yes, if you are good, you may come as well," said her father. "Only, don't get stung."

Vi's anxiety vanished, and she thought with some satisfaction that for to-day, at all events, *Rousseau's Dream* would have a holiday as well as herself.

But it was after breakfast that the trial came. The knowledge of a holiday and the prospect

of a swarm made it very hard to be good ; and it was only by going to the hive that the children could be amused at all.

Old Charles, who was digging close at hand, to be ready when the swarm began, had already secured a hive, as well as several old kettles, frying-pans, and other miscellaneous pieces of hardware wherewith to lure the swarm into their new quarters. The children stood before the hive as if rooted to the ground. They, at least, did not mean to lose a single incident of the exciting scene which was about to take place, but silently watched as only children can when once they are interested.

"Listen, Jackie!" said Vi. "I can hear something."

"What?" whispered Jackie.

Both were silent, and presently heard from the direction of the hive the feeble, plaintive pipe of the imprisoned Queen and the fiercely-jealous challenge of the Queen Mother.

Jackie, now that he was big and able to take care of himself, was not so timid as formerly.

"Hark at her!" he said. "She's simply furious because she can't get at the new Queen." Then calling to the gardener, he said, "Charles, Charles, come quickly! You can hear the queens calling to each other."

The old man came up. "Zure 'nough," he said slowly, as he bent over the hive. "Zo

they be, zo they be. Er won't be long now, Mas'r Jackie. Do ee run along an' tell yer vather er be comin' out soon. Dash my waisket, er's a rare un vur to take notice, that er be !”

“Mind you watch whilst I'm away !” said Jackie to Vi. “I'm going to tell father,” and he ran off full of importance, while Vi remained to observe the workers' endless circles round the hive.

Jackie soon came back with his father, who was almost as excited as Jackie himself.

“Oh, father ; do just listen to the Queen !” said Vi ; and in a minute they heard again the shrill challenge of the Queen Mother and the answering pipe of her daughter.

Jackie had been looking with some interest at the throng of workers who were flying round and round the hive.

“I say, Vi !” he suddenly exclaimed. “I know what's the matter. The workers have been eating honey all night. Don't you see how lazy and heavy they are ?”

“Quite right, Jackie,” said his father. “This is the only holiday the bees ever have. Every day but the one on which they swarm is a day of toil and exertion. Now, however, they feed to their hearts' content and enjoy themselves, before beginning the heavy work of building up the new hive.”

Old Charles was waiting anxiously with the pots and kettles to make what he called "bee-music." Jackie's father smiled.

"What are you going to do with those old pots, Charles?" he asked.

"They be vur to make the bee-music, zur."

"Oh, yes," said Vi, "and I am going to beat a kettle, too!"

"What for?" inquired her father.

"I don't know," said Vi. "Isn't it because the bees like it?"

"No," replied her father. "As a matter of fact, bees have very little sense of hearing, and can only distinguish a few sounds, such as the cry of the young queens, or the buzz of the Queen Mother. This pot and kettle beating is no good at all. It is only a superstition which has come down to us from times when people did not know as much as they do now-a-days. Of course," he continued, "we can't say for certain how much a bee can hear; but clever men who have studied the subject have told us that sound does not affect them very much."

"What!" said Jackie. "Are bees deaf?"

"Very nearly, my boy."

"Poor things!" said Vi. "Is that why the Queen Mother has to shriek so loud?"

"I give it up," said her father, laughing.

"Look!" suddenly cried Jackie.





The Swarm.

There was a momentary hush within the hive : a dead stillness. Instantly the workers, who had been lazily sunning themselves, began to crowd towards the door, which they entered, until, at last, not a bee was to be seen.

“ ‘Em won’t be long a-comin’ now,” said old Charles.

The stillness was almost oppressive : Jackie and Vi hardly dared breathe. It was the silence of immediate departure.

“ Here they come ; here they come ! ” shouted Jackie, as a few of the workers crept cautiously out by the door and, rising in the air, circled round the hive several times, as if to see that no enemy were at hand.

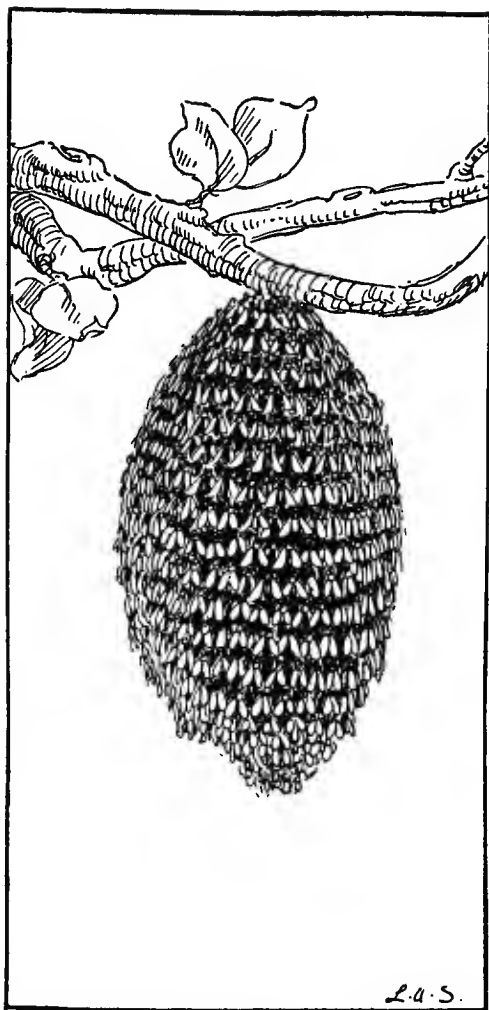
The coast being clear, the little scouts again descended to the door of the hive, which they faced, and with their wings gave the signal that all was well. Instantly the swarming bees began to pour out of the doorway with wonderful rapidity, now rising in the air, now hovering above the hive, as if waiting for their companions to join them.

In a short time the air was filled with a host of buzzing bees,—workers and drones,—waiting patiently until the Queen Mother and her whole swarm should have left the hive.

“ There she is ! ” said Vi, who was watching the doorway. “ There’s the Queen ! ” she exclaimed, as the well-known, fat, pointed body

appeared, preceded by the maids of honour, walking backwards, and by a singing, circling company of drones.

The Queen Mother paused: her life had hitherto been almost all spent within the semi-darkness of the hive, and, consequently, the bright sunlight dazzled her. Then, again, her wings were stiff from want of exercise. It seemed as if



"One huge, humming, surging mass of bees."

her subjects fully realised these facts, for they waited anxiously, coming and going, but always watching their sovereign.

At last she rose and slowly soared above the hive, and the lazy throng became more animated. Meanwhile, the scouts had selected a rallying point—the branch of an over-hanging apple tree, to which the swarm made its way, and whither the maids of honour directed the flight of their Queen, singing triumphant songs the while. There she alighted, and was joined by the whole throng, who crowded up and collected together ; one huge, humming, surging mass of bees.

Now was the opportunity for old Charles to secure the prize. Creeping up, he successfully transferred the whole swarm to the new hive, which he placed on the bench beside the other.

“ There, Jackie ! ” said his father. “ Another hive for you to watch. I should not be surprised if, before very long, there is still another. Run away, now, and get ready for dinner.”

## CHAPTER IX

### THE NEW QUEEN BEGINS HER REIGN

“**H**OW did you enjoy the swarm this morning?” asked Nameless, as the children accompanied him on their visit to the bees in the afternoon.

“Oh, it was fine!” said Jackie. “Lovely! But it did seem hard to see the old Queen Mother leave her own hive and one of her daughters take her place.”

“That,” said Nameless, “must be. It is the law of Hiveland; although, of course, as with all laws, there are exceptions. Anyhow, it will be more comfortable inside this afternoon, and cooler. Besides, we shall see the new Queen come out of the Royal Chamber.”

“Oh,” said Vi, “that will be nice! I do so want to see her, poor thing! How glad she will be to get out after being built in like a prisoner, with only a tiny little hole in the door for her to take her food.”

Nameless was quite right; the atmosphere of the hive was much fresher, and the crowd

of bees not so great. The little party was now able to move about the waxen streets without much difficulty.

"What's become of Don Drone?" said Jackie. "Has he gone with the old Queen Mother? He had so much to say about her, that I suppose he is sure to have left with her and her swarm."

"Oh, I am so sorry!" replied Vi. "I liked him, in spite of his lazy ways; and he was always very kind to us."

Imagine their surprise, therefore, when they saw the Don swaggering along to meet them, as if a swarm was an every-day occurrence.

"Dear old Don!" exclaimed Vi. "We are so pleased to see you, and were just saying we were certain you had gone off with the Queen Mother, as you were so fond of her."

The Don looked uneasy. "Hush!" said he. "I don't think I would say much about the Queen Mother if I were you. She's gone, you see, and the new Queen will be coming out directly. As long as the Queen Mother was here, we were obliged to pay her all the respect we could; but now—well, circumstances alter cases, and, of course, the new Queen is younger; in short, it was too much trouble to leave the hive now that there is plenty to eat," and so he went on, making excuses.

"Don," said Jackie, adopting the serious

air that Miss Forman sometimes employed with him. "I don't think you are telling us the truth! You don't look me in the face as if you were. You are hiding something, I know."

Nameless was much amused.

"But why didn't you go?" enquired Vi. "Did you quarrel with the Queen Mother before she left?"

The Don was silent; he had evidently something on his mind.

"Come, come!" said Nameless. "Tell us all about it. We can keep a secret, can't we?"

"Rather!" said Jackie. "I should think we could!"

But the Don still hesitated. He looked mysteriously around, to see if any of the other drones were listening, and at last summoned up courage. He drew all three aside to a quiet corner.

"I can trust you," he said. "I had a reason for remaining behind. I am ambitious."

Jackie and Vi burst out laughing. They thought the Don was the last person in the world to harbour such feelings.

"What are you laughing at?" said the Don sharply. "I'm serious. If you are going to make fun of me, I won't tell you."

"Do!" said Vi, who was just a little in-



"Jackie and Vi burst out laughing."



quisitive. "I fancy we were laughing at something else."

"Well, then," replied the Don, with an anxious glance to see that he was not overheard; "I'm in love."

Again the children felt inclined to laugh, but tried to look very serious.

"And whom do you think I am in love with?"

"I don't know," said Jackie.

"Do tell us!" pleaded Vi.

The Don approached with an air of great mystery, and whispered in their ears—

• "THE NEW QUEEN!"

"Oh!" cried the children, breathlessly.

"But you haven't seen her yet," said Vi.  
"She might be ugly, you know."

"I am sure she is very beautiful," answered the love-sick drone. "Didn't you hear her voice yesterday? Can anyone be ugly with a voice like that? Besides, think of *me*—Don Drone, Prince Consort of the Hive! They'd give me plenty to eat then, and instead of five or six bees to feed me I should have a dozen, or even twenty, or the whole hive, if I wished. Think of it—Don Drone, Father of the Hive! As much honey every day as I want, with workers to brush me and wait upon me. It would be glorious!"

From which it will be seen that the Don's

love was a purely selfish one, and that his idea in marrying the Queen was simply to get more to eat, and be even lazier and more indolent than ever. Nameless looked grave and sad.

"Well, don't forget us when you are a great person," said Jackie.

"Oh, no!" replied the Don. "You shall come and see me every day. I daresay I could manage to spare a little honey for you as well. I'm not greedy, you know."

"Come," said Nameless, who looked very solemn. "Let us see the new Queen come out of her chamber."

"Yes, yes!" cried the excited Don. "Come along!" and he hastily brushed his wings and shook out his furry legs and tail. "How am I looking?" he added.

"Beautiful!" said Vi.

The Don preened himself. "Not bad, I must say!" he rejoined. "They tell me I have beautiful eyes." Indeed, his whole head was composed of eyes, which glittered and shone with pride.

"How many have you, Don?" inquired Jackie. "There seem such a lot!"

"About three thousand, I believe," he replied, with a careless air.

"But why have you got so many?" asked Vi. "We've only two each, and that's enough for anyone, surely!"

“You see,” said Nameless ; “the Don—and, in fact, all insects—require a lot of eyes. They can’t turn their heads about as you can, and, consequently, must have eyes wherever they want to look. Our good friend the Don has a stiff neck, and can’t turn his head round when he hears anything coming behind him ; so Nature has given him eyes by means of which he can see in every direction ; otherwise, he would soon be eaten up.

By this time they had reached the Royal Cell, where an anxious crowd awaited the coming of the new Queen. The Don pushed his way through the expectant throng until he and his companions were well in front, and stood looking as dignified as he could. The workers had already begun to open the thick door of the cell, which had been so hastily constructed the day before for the protection of the coming Queen from the fury of her mother. In a very short time the wall was torn down, and the new Sovereign crawled forth—if such a term can be used to express this action of the Queen—to take up her position as Mistress of the Hive.

Instantly her maids of honour presented themselves and began to make her toilet, brushing and stroking her with a thousand little endearments, while others circled around her with a gentle buzz of love and affection.

There was no disloyal voice in the whole hive, and she began her reign in peace. How would it end?

The Don was in an ecstasy of rapture.

"Look at her beautiful small head, and her gorgeous fat body!" exclaimed the ardent lover. "What wings! What eyes! What a figure!"

Vi couldn't help saying—"We don't think a small head and a very fat body at all beautiful! Besides, she can't have much brain in a tiny head like that!"

The Don was amazed. "What's the good of a large brain in a Queen?" he asked. "She has no thinking to do: that is all done by the workers. She has only to be the Mother of the Hive. Who ever heard of a Queen Bee with any ideas at all, except about laying eggs? It would be ridiculous! We drones, it is true, have larger brains than the others, but we don't use them. We have more eyes than the workers, but we don't need them; and it's just that which makes us so much superior to the rest!"

"I don't see that you are a bit superior!" replied Jackie. "If you have brains and eyes, you *ought* to use them."

The Don was too busy posturing before the new Queen to notice this remark. With her advent, the whole hive once more settled down

to its daily routine. The nurses still continued to feed the young grubs which constantly came out of the eggs deposited by the late Queen, left as her legacy to the hive which she had founded. They resumed the instruction of the young workers, and fed the drone babies; while, in the store-room in front of the hive, the honey of May was sealed up in the lower cells, beneath that which had been stored in April.

Matters thus went on peacefully for three or four days, when Jackie and Vi again visited the hive with their little friend. On their arrival, they met the Don in a great state of excitement.

"So glad you have come!" said he. "I have great news for you. To-day her Majesty will go out on her royal progress and select her mate. I'm dreadfully nervous!" and his antennæ trembled with anxiety.

"Well, you know," said Nameless, "'faint heart never won fair lady.'"

"Thank you, my dear friend," said the Don. "I hope I have your good wishes?"

"Indeed, you have," replied Vi.

"Thank you, thank you!" said the amorous Don. "Do you think I am looking my best to-day?" and he slowly turned round that they might judge of his appearance. He was, indeed, as smart as a drone could wish to be.

His wings were carefully smoothed out, and his beautiful brown fur was as sleek as a cat's. In fact, he was quite a picture.

The Queen, also, was evidently somewhat anxious ; she had not as yet left the hive. For her, the dangers of the flight\* would be great, since she knew nothing of the hundred enemies which lurk everywhere, waiting to prey upon the unwary bee.

Preceded by her maids of honour, she paced to and fro within the hive, examining it ; and her disquietude seemed to infect the workers, who regarded her anxiously as they came and went on their various errands. At last her mind was made up. She uttered a curious buzz, which at once seemed to cause a joyous consternation in the hive.

The Don and his comrades all rushed to the door to form a grand, though harmless guard of honour to their sovereign on her progress, singing at the same time, in their loud, deep bass, a joyful song of welcome. The Queen heard, it and replied. Then, rushing forward between the ranks of her maids of honour, who stood aside to let her pass, she left the hive, lingering for a moment on the ledge outside, to look for the first time at the outer world, now bathed in the glorious sunlight of the bright May afternoon.

\* She only takes this flight once in her life.—F.S.

Jackie, Vi, and Nameless followed her, and hovered near to see the grand procession start.

"Can't we go with her?" inquired Jackie.

"No," said Nameless, firmly. "We must not go. No one but the Queen and her guard of drones is allowed to join the procession."

The Queen still lingered on the ledge, examining well the hive and its position, that she might make no mistake, upon her return, by entering the wrong one.

"What's she waiting for?" asked the impatient Jackie. "Why doesn't she start? Can't she see that all the drones are ready?"

"Yes," replied Nameless; "but she must be careful, and remember what her hive is like; otherwise she might go to the wrong one."

"What would happen then?" inquired Vi.

"She would be taken prisoner," replied Nameless, "and incarcerated in the 'living cell.'"

"What's that?" said Jackie.

"I mean this," explained Nameless: "if she entered a strange hive, she would be surrounded by a guard of worker bees, who would keep her as a prisoner in a corner and starve her to death; or, perhaps, the Queen Mother might find her and fight with her till one or other was killed."

"Oh, how cruel of the workers to starve her to death!" said Vi. "Why couldn't they sting her at once, and put her out of misery?"

"That would be quite wrong in Hiveland," replied Nameless. "The law is very strict: no bee but a Queen may unsheath a sting to kill a Queen. It's a statute that has never been broken. There are no regicides among Hive-people."

"I know what a regicide is," said Jackie. "We read about it in history, when Charles the First had his head cut off." Jackie was very strong on the more violent portions of national history.

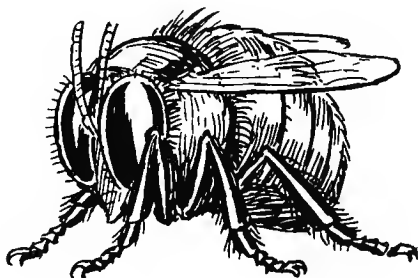
While they had been talking, the Queen had thoroughly examined the hive and taken its bearings, and as they concluded their discussion she rose, with a broad, circular sweep, and spread her wings for her first flight, followed by the gorgeous guard of drones, whose hum sounded loud and deep, in striking contrast to the high, shrill buzz of the swarm which they had heard a few days before.

Thrice the gay throng circled the hive, gleaming as they wheeled round and round in the sunlight, each time rising higher and higher; and at the head of the band rose the Queen, glorying and rejoicing in her first full enjoyment of freedom. Higher and higher she soared, followed by her attendants, some



of whom, fat and lazy from want of exercise or over-feeding, gradually fell back one by one, and returned to the hive to rest after such unusual excitement. At last the Queen was lost to sight.

“There!” said Nameless. “They are gone, and you must go home to tea. I daresay we shall hear more about the Royal Marriage to-morrow, so don’t forget to be in good time at the cedar tree.”



## CHAPTER X

### THE DEATH OF THE DON, AND THE PIRATE MOTH

IT was a dull, gloomy, cloudy day ; a perfect contrast to the previous one, on which the Queen had set forth on her triumphant marriage progress. The children, as well as Nameless, seemed to feel its depressing influence, as they went to learn the end of the moving pageant they had witnessed the day before. A deathly silence brooded over the garden.

The familiar hum of the bees was stilled, for they had evidently decided—as is their custom on such days—not to leave the hive. The trumpet and cup-shaped blossoms in the garden had already begun to close, as if they felt it useless to expose their glory and beauty to so sad a sky ; while a cold east wind was whistling and moaning among the flowers, and buffeting them until they bent, as if shrinking beneath its chilly caress. Nameless was strangely silent.

“Where are you taking us?” asked Jackie,

who noticed that they were not, as usual, directing their flight straight to the hive.

The question seemed to rouse the little man from the reverie into which he had fallen.

"My dear children," said he, "I have very bad news for you ; news which, I am sure, will grieve you very much. Your poor friend Don Drone is dead."

Jackie and Vi were astonished. "*Dead?*" they exclaimed in one voice.

"Yes," replied Nameless. "The poor Don did not know the inexorable law of the hive—that the honour of mating with royalty also entails the penalty of death. The Don was ambitious, and he achieved his purpose. He was selected by the Queen to be her mate ; but the price of this distinction is death. Little did he think yesterday, as he set forth in all the pride of life and filled with joy, that he was going to his own destruction ; but this is the doom of every Royal Consort."

"Poor Don!" said Vi. "I am so sorry!"

"However," said Nameless, "his wish was gratified. I thought,



perhaps, you would like to take a last look at his body."

He led them to a corner of the garden over-shadowed by trees, and there, on the damp, black earth, lay the lifeless form of the Don, horribly mangled, and utterly unlike the gallant figure which, only a few hours before, had circled round the hive, pouring out a deep, resounding song of praise.

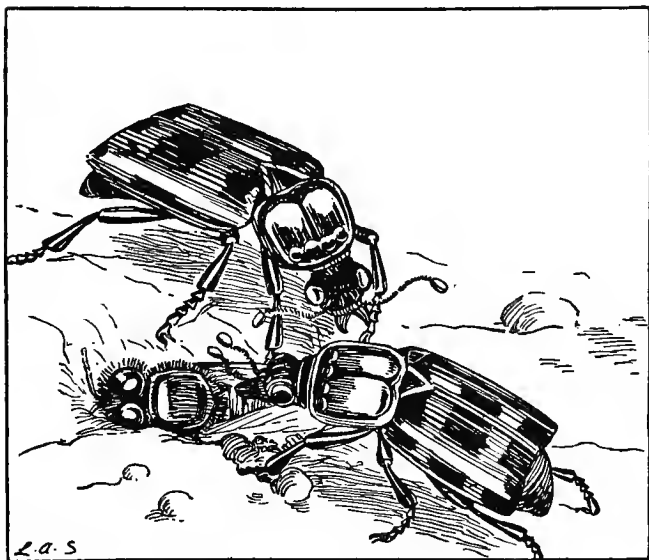
The children turned away ; they could not bear to look upon the terrible sight. Poor little Vi began to weep ; and even Jackie, who was not so tender-hearted, looked solemn.

"Tell us about it," he said, quietly.

"Yesterday, after we saw the Queen go forth," said Nameless, "she and her guard rose slowly, higher and higher, into the air, far, far above the trees. One by one the drones fell back, too lazy or too weak to continue their flight, until at length the Queen and the Don alone remained of all the band which had started, when, as a reward for his faith and endurance, the Queen honoured him by making him her consort. Then, high up in the sky, she killed him. Think, children, of the poor Don's dead body rushing through the air, now striking against a branch, and bounding off again only to strike another and another, until at last he fell, the mangled wreck you now see, here !"

"How sad!" exclaimed Vi.

"Perhaps, yes," replied Nameless. "But when you have seen a little more of hive life, I think you will agree with me that, after all, the Don has had a better death than most drones. But, see!—he is going to be buried."



"At last it sank into its little grave."

"Where?" inquired Jackie.

"Here," replied Nameless. "The sexton beetles have come to perform the ceremony," he added, pointing towards two black, horny beetles, who were slowly clambering towards the body of the poor drone.

At length they arrived, and instantly and with the greatest care began, with their jaws and feet, to dig away all the earth around the Don's body, until at last it sank into its little grave, and was neatly covered by the two sextons, who then, as slowly and laboriously as they had come, marched off to find some similar task.

Jackie and Vi took particular notice of the place.

"We'll put up a tombstone to the Don," said the former ; "and you, Vi, shall write on it," he added, thus relieving himself of a task he much disliked.

"And now," said Nameless, "there is just time to go and look at the hive and see the new Queen," and away they flew.

"But," said Vi, "are we not going to make any new friend in the hive, to take the place of Don Drone ? Although he was very lazy and greedy, he was always ready to help us, and give us the news of the hive. If it had not been for him, I don't believe we should ever have got inside at all, but should have been stung to death by the Amazon guard at the gate."

"P'r'aps they won't let us in, now the Don is dead," suggested Jackie.

"There is a good deal of sense in what you say," replied Nameless. "The bees are very

particular little people with strangers, and it will, I am sure, be just as well to secure a new friend in the hive. I mean to ask one of the Don's friends, Baron Buzz, to help us in future."

"Oh! Is he a nice man?" said Vi. "I mean, a nice drone," she added, correcting herself.

"I think you will like him," replied Nameless. "I daresay we shall meet him outside the hive, as he is fat and doesn't care to be squeezed, or have his toes trodden upon, inside. Why, there he is!" and the children saw a very plump, sleek-looking drone, sitting on one side of the ledge of the hive, singing to himself in a deep bass voice.

"I say!" remarked Jackie; "isn't he fat? And what a voice he has!"

In fact, the Baron was a different sort of drone from the Don. He was a happy, lazy, and contented person, without a bit of the pride and importance which had so distinguished their late friend.

Nameless, when they had alighted, made a bow to the gentleman. "My dear Baron," said he, "I am delighted to see you. We have just been to see the last of your poor friend the Don, who, as you know, died yesterday. Poor fellow! He was not without faults, but good-hearted."

The Baron paused in his song. "You don't say so!" he remarked. "I did just go out with them yesterday to give them a start with the music; but I had no idea the Don ever aspired to the honour of Queen's consort. I heard that someone had been killed, and they told me it was the usual thing. For my own part, I can't be bothered with all that nonsense. Let me alone, say I. Let me sit out here, to sun myself and sing.

"Talking about the sun; there doesn't seem to be much of it about to-day. I'm afraid I shall catch a cold and lose my voice. Come inside! Besides, it's nearly honey time, and I never miss that, unless the workers are busy. Then I go on short commons; but there's no fear of that now. There are plenty of little workers coming out, and I hear the new Queen is laying eggs. I wish, sometimes, these Queens wouldn't do so, because the hive gets so full that there is hardly room for a decent-sized drone—like me, for example—to get about. Come along!" and, with an off-hand salute to the Amazons, he entered the hive with his new friends.

What an effect the dull weather had upon the bees inside! They all seemed sleepy and lazy. Even the new Queen moved slowly from cell to cell, as she deposited her little blue eggs. The nurses, who were tending the still



increasing family of young bees, seemed slow in fetching down the pollen for the grubs, and in feeding and brushing the new arrivals. The sweeper gang made a toil of their task of removing the empty cocoons of the young bees, and the waxmakers in their curtain seemed unable to produce their customary amount of wax. The Bar<sup>on</sup>, however, regarded the whole condition of the hive with the greatest satisfaction.

"It is a relief," he exclaimed, "to find things a bit quieter! I hate excitement; and we have had such a lot of it lately. First of all, there was the swarm when we came here: that was a nuisance. I only joined it because the hive we came from was too full to be pleasant. I thought there would be more peace in a new home. Then, when we came, there was all the fuss of building the comb; then another swarm, and yesterday the Royal Progress.

"All these things upset my quiet life; and, besides that, they disturb the workers, who don't get in half enough honey. Now, what I should like to see is a big hive with just enough workers to fill it, no brood cells, no swarming; nothing, in fact, but honey gathering and feeding. That's my idea of a hive!"

"Very good from your point of view, I daresay," said Nameless; "but I am afraid it would hardly do, as a general rule."

"Perhaps not," replied the Baron; "but I can't be bothered to discuss the matter."

"I say, Baron!" said Jackie. "I've been looking at the comb. It seems different from what it was at first. It's got quite dark, and doesn't look so nice as when it was just built up."

"Ah!" said the Baron. "They've been busy at it to-day, I expect; giving it a coat of varnish, you know."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Vi.

"Well, you see," replied the Baron; "the varnish is just the same as the gum which was put over the snail's body over there: it preserves the comb. Even the best comb wears out with use; but the varnish, I am told, makes it wear better and longer; so that's a comfort."

"Why, look! There's another royal cell," said Vi, pointing to one of the curious pear-shaped cells in the brood comb. "Is there going to be another Queen?"

"Of course," said Nameless. "In a very short time the hive will be full once more, and there will be a new swarm. This time we will go and see the young Queen grub being fed; for, if you remember, we had no time to see it done before, as we were so occupied with the worker and drone babies." So they passed on to the Royal Cell.

"What's all that stuff?" demanded Jackie, pointing to quite a lot of treacly-looking syrup on the floor of the cell. "Why don't the sweepers clear it away?"

"That, Jackie, the grub will do, if you watch it closely. It is Royal jelly, the food of Princess bees. They are fed with it, and that is what makes them Queens. If they were to eat ordinary bee-bread instead of the jelly, they would grow up into drones."

As they looked, they saw the fat white grub greedily devouring the jelly, which the nurses poured from their heads into the cells. Nameless continued—

"The Royal nurses are so careful of their charge, that they give her even more than she can eat, from fear that she may grow up weakly."

"But isn't that wasteful?" asked Vi.

"Perhaps it may be," replied Nameless; "but you know extravagance is excusable where great persons like Queens are concerned."

Suddenly a shrill cry echoed through the hive; a cry which exactly resembled that of a young Queen just hatched. In a moment consternation reigned, and though slow and lazy, owing to the cold, dark day, the bees began to inquire of one another, by means of their antennæ, whence the noise came, and what it meant.

"Oh, Baron! What is it?" said Vi, who fancied the cry was that of a young Queen.

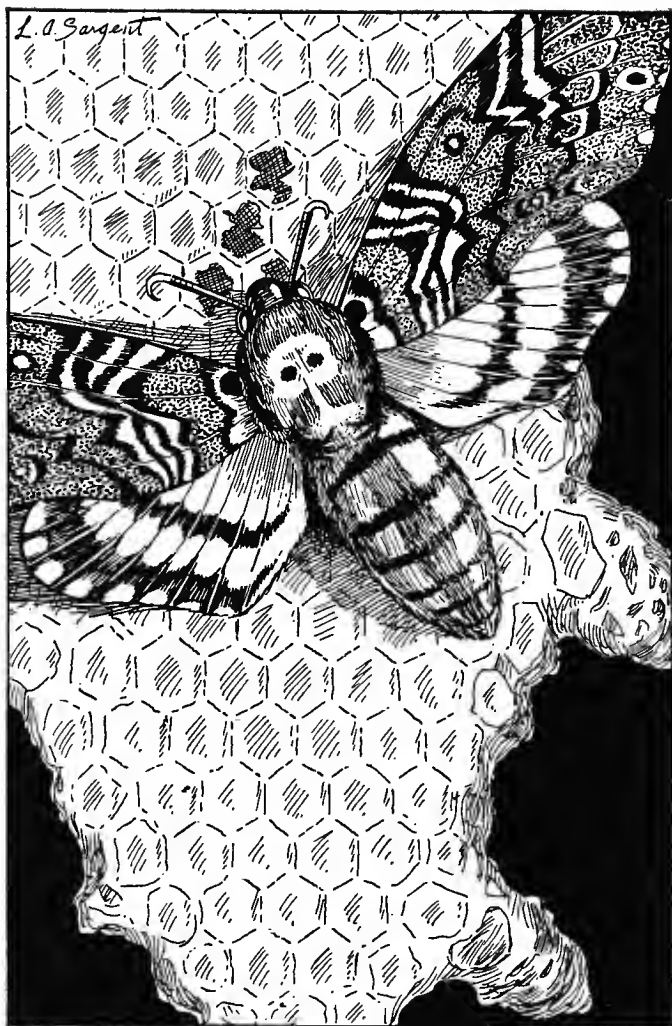
The Baron looked disturbed. "I can't say that I quite know," he replied. "I suppose there is something the matter, or the workers wouldn't be running about like that; but really you shouldn't ask me, because I am the last person to trouble myself about such things. Dear, dear! Nothing but disturbances and unrest! What a miserable hive to live in!"

The bees were sorely puzzled. The nurses at the Royal cells reported that no young Queens were even expected to hatch at this time. They listened at the cells, but all was silent. The Queen Mother, even—for such the new Queen must now be called—was also much agitated; but her maids of honour soothed her. Nameless chuckled.

"Ha, ha!" he said to the children. "I think I know all about this. It is a trick of another robber and enemy of the hive, who is fond of honey and means to get it, but is not such a clumsy bungler as the wasp, who trusts to his sting alone, and usually gets killed."

"Oh, do tell us all about it!" exclaimed Jackie. "Who is the robber, and why does he make that peculiar noise?"

"One thing at a time," replied Nameless, as the same cry sent a thrill of consternation through the hive. "First of all, I will tell



The Death's Head Moth.

you who the robber is. He is an insect, too, but a very big one, and lives close by. Ugly to look at, some folks say, though I admire him, myself ; and he has an ugly name."

"What is it ?" said Vi. "Do tell us !"

"His English name," said the little man, "is the Death's Head Moth. I won't bother you with his Latin one. He lives in the potato patch close to the hive. Come along and look at him."

They hurried down, leaving the Baron, who was, like the others, half stupid, half panic-stricken. At the door, a curious sight awaited them. All the Amazons and ventilators seemed to be mesmerised ; while, slowly pushing his way past the entrance was the Death's Head Moth. He was, indeed, to the children in their small condition, a fearsome sight.

The moth seemed as big as an elephant. His eyes shone out on his head like two red lanterns, while his antennæ waved like two huge plumes. His long trunk was already half uncurled, ready to taste the honey, while the claws of his feet, firmly hooked into the floor of the hive, helped him to pull his large, unwieldy body through the narrow opening of the doorway.

Slowly the large form, encased in thick fur, entered the hive, shrieking his terrible cry as he came. At each shriek the bees became as

dead things, unable to move, yet seeing all. The children could not distinguish the whole of the monster's body, for it was shrouded by two gigantic fore-wings of a dark shade, a colour often noticed on dead leaves, or withered branches ; but such part as they did see was horrible to look at ; for upon the shoulders, in vivid yellow on a black ground, was the awful figure of a death's head.

Vi shuddered : she did not like such creatures.

"Now, Jackie," said Nameless ; "you see who the intruder is. He is a pirate : the pirate of the insect world, who bravely flaunts his black flag on his back, instead of at the mast-head."

Jackie was decidedly interested : he had a weakness for pirates.

"Whir-r-r-r !" again shrieked the pirate moth, to terrify his victims, as he leapt upon the comb and began eagerly to bite away the waxen seal upon the golden store cells. As he did so, his huge wings extended, and disclosed the brilliant yellow-and-black under-wings, which gave him, if possible, a still more sinister appearance.

"Why does he make that noise ?" enquired Jackie.

Nameless paused, and looked puzzled. "Well, Jackie," he answered ; "there are some things which even an Elf-man doesn't know,

and this is one of them. The bees themselves can't explain it ; but the noise affects and frightens them so much, that they are too alarmed to think of turning out the intruder. Besides this, he always selects a time for his onslaught when they are sleepy, and that is generally either at night or when the day is dull, because at such times he can see better than at others. Look ! how greedily he is licking up the honey, which has taken so long to gather ! ”

At length the awful creature, heavy with honey, slowly relaxed his hold. The huge, wide wings, which had been trembling with pleasure, were folded again upon his fat, pointed body. He now prepared to retire, slowly crawling down, and clumsily forcing his way once more through the door of the hive, where they saw him spread his enormous wings and flap them lazily, as he once more returned to the potato patch, his shrill cry gradually dying away in the distance.

As he sailed away, the hive seemed to wake into life once more. The workers hurried down to examine the damage their enemy had wrought, and to fill up the jagged holes he had rent in the store-rooms. The waxmakers were called, and the architect sculptors, who carefully examined the entrance of the hive.

“ Why are they all crowding at the door ? ”



said Vi to the Baron, who had just come up, singing gaily as if nothing had happened.

"I don't know," he replied; "but I'll find out for you."

So saying, he joined the little group, and by the movement of his antennæ seemed to be talking to the architect. At length he returned.

"Quite simple, my child," he explained. "The hive has decided to protect itself against such an attack in future. The architects have hit upon a plan to prevent this thief from paying us a second visit. They are going to build up a row of pillars, which will not only keep him outside, but, also, any other large robber."

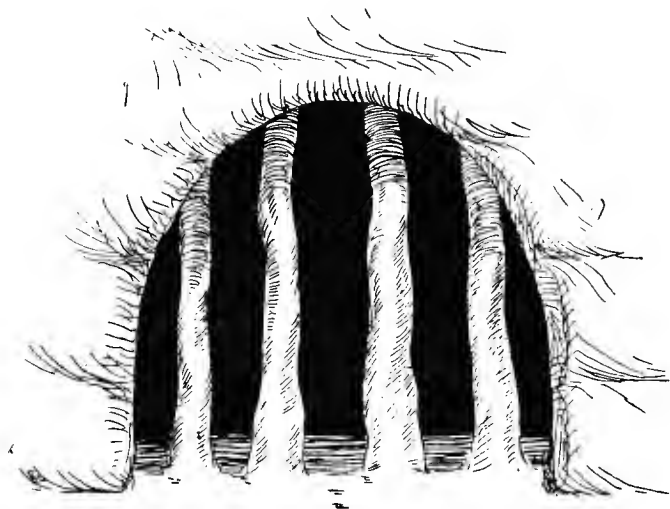
The Baron was right. The waxmakers had deposited their material in heaps, under the instructions of the architects, who began to raise several little pillars at the door of the hive, which, though wide enough to allow the bees to go in and out, would yet effectually stop any larger creature from forcing his way in.

"And now," said Nameless, "we must be off," and the children, knowing that he meant what he said, went obediently with him.

"There will be no fear of the bees losing any more honey," Jackie remarked, as they returned.

"I don't know," said Nameless. "I think

there are plenty of enemies left, who will be able to penetrate that waxen barrier; but, as the poor old Don used to say, 'wait and see.'"



## CHAPTER XI

### THE RAID

ONCE more the hive had settled down to its usual routine. The new Queen Mother continued her task of depositing eggs in cells which the sweeper gangs had prepared; the grey bee babies were hatched at their appointed season. The workers went forth on their daily errand, returning with their load of honey, and the store-rooms were gradually filled in due and regular order: the honey of April at the very top, then that of May, then of June, and so on.

But though the workers made every effort to collect a sufficient store, it was evident that they were by no means satisfied with the result of their labours, and no one seemed more emphatic upon this point than Baron Buzz.

"It's really very serious," he said to Vi one afternoon. "Every available worker is as busy as possible, but it cannot be denied that this is a bad year for honey. If matters don't improve, this scarcity will mean a serious loss

to the hive, because, you see, our numbers are already increasing. Even if there is another swarm, I doubt if there will be food enough for the winter."

"Why, Baron," said Vi, "I had no idea you took such an interest in the work of the hive! I thought you liked to be lazy, and not trouble yourself about its business."

"No, no, my dear; there you are wrong," replied the Baron. "As far as swarms and Queens and the politics of the hive go, I care very little; for the simple reason that I know the law is fixed and can't be altered. But the question of food is another affair altogether. The hive couldn't exist without it."

"Tell me," said Jackie, "how long does a bee live?"

Nameless gasped. "Now, Jackie," he said; "you have given me another hard question; nevertheless, it is a very natural one. The life of a bee, as a rule, depends upon the amount of work it performs. To begin with, Queens generally live about two—or, at most, three—years; that is, if they meet with no accident. Then come the drones," he continued quickly, with an uneasy glance at the Baron. "The oldest drone I ever saw died at the age of five months. As for the workers, they, of course, have a hard life and soon die, with the exception of those who

sleep through the winter. In the full working season, I should say that a worker's life was no longer than six or seven weeks. Hundreds of them, too, die accidentally, from exposure, as you saw the other day, or from hunger and cold in a hard winter, or from the attacks of birds, or from the loss of their stings."

"Then," said Vi, "many of the workers never enjoy the honey they have gathered with such care?"

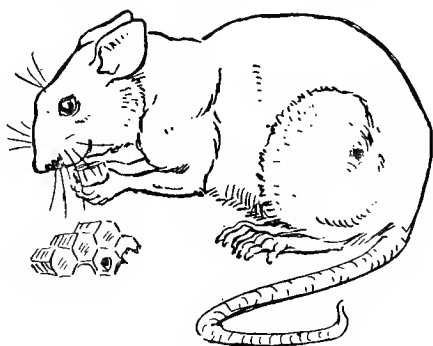
"Certainly not," replied Nameless. "All the workers who collected the honey now in the upper store-room are dead; and I suppose there is hardly one worker bee left which belonged to the swarm that came in here first."

"Well, I call it jolly hard lines!" ejaculated Jackie. "They have to do all the hard work, and get nothing for it!"

"True," said Nameless; "but then, a bee is always most unselfish. It never thinks of itself, but of the hive to which it belongs. If left alone it would die of loneliness and misery; and it despises all solitary insects that live for themselves only. Don't you remember the old fable of the bundle of sticks which the farmer gave to his sons to break, and on which they were unable to make any impression until the cord that fastened them together was untied, when they could break each stick separately?"

So it is with bee-folk. United they stand, divided they fall. That seems to be the motto of their existence; and a very good one they appear to have found it."

By this time the children were able to see the waxen pillars which had been erected at the door of the hive to keep out that dreaded pirate the Death's Head Moth. Jackie was very interested in them, and asked Nameless

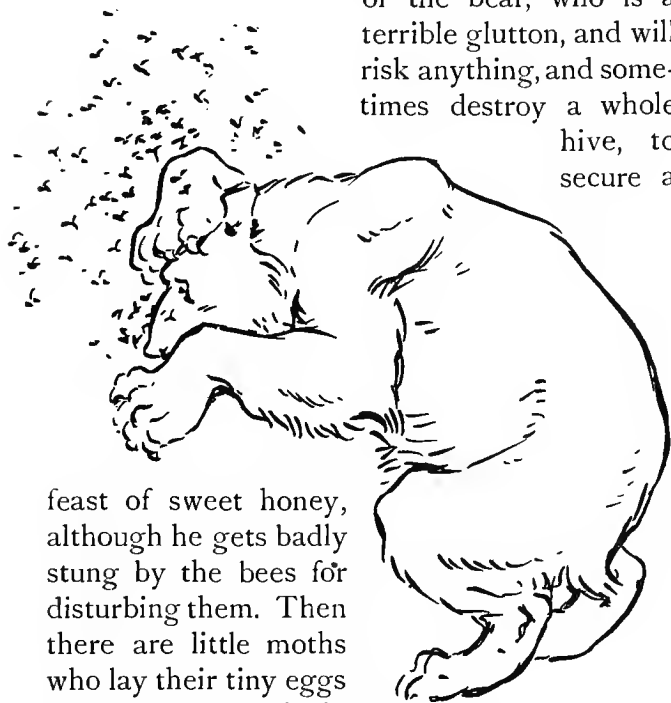


if there were any other enemies who would be likely to attack the hive.

"Oh, yes," replied the little man. "The bee, as I have already told you, is constantly beset by them. In the first place, there are wasps and hornets, who are sworn foes of bees. These continually attack the hive, and, in the case of hornets, are very difficult to tackle. Then there are two other well-known, four-footed enemies—rats and mice,

who have been known to do an enormous amount of harm to a hive.

“In foreign countries there is an even larger and still more dangerous enemy, in the shape of the bear, who is a terrible glutton, and will risk anything, and sometimes destroy a whole hive, to secure a



feast of sweet honey, although he gets badly stung by the bees for disturbing them. Then there are little moths who lay their tiny eggs in the comb, which, when hatched out into hundreds of grubs, not only eat the honey, but destroy the cells as well. These are the principal foes who threaten the hive; but there are still more waiting for the workers and drones outside—even the Queen



“The bear will sometimes destroy a whole hive  
to secure a feast of honey.”



herself, when she leaves the hive. Nothing would please the woodpecker more than a nice, fat drone. Then there are swallows, who swoop down suddenly upon the workers when they are busy gathering honey; and the tit-

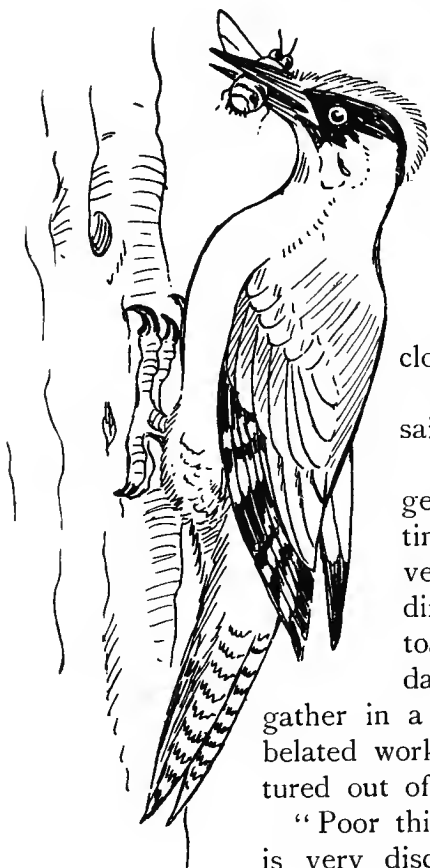
mouse family, the cuckoo, and even our small friend the sparrow."

"And the lizards," added Vi. "Don't you remember, Jackie, how the lizard gobbled up the drone in the clover field?"

"Oh, yes, of course!" said he.

"Another fine, fat gentleman, too," continued Nameless, "is very fond of a bee for dinner, and that is the toad. On a cold, wet day, he manages to gather in a good many of the belated workers who have ventured out of the hive."

"Poor things!" said Vi. "It is very discouraging for them,



when they work so hard, to have so many enemies!"

Nameless smiled. "But what about their human foes?" he asked. "Do you not take their honey every year? Before you begin to find fault with other animals you ought to remember that you are the greatest robbers of all. In Nature," he continued, "every animal or insect preys upon his neighbours. The spider devours the fly, the bird devours the spider, the hawk swoops down upon the bird."

"Yes," said Jackie; "but, remember, we give the bees the flowers in our garden to feed from. They would get very little honey if we did not plant flowers for them."

"And," replied Nameless, "you would have very few flowers if it were not for the bees."

"Why," argued Jackie, "the bees don't help in the garden at all! Charles plants the seeds and waters them; they grow up and flower; and when they have flowered, he keeps the seed-pods for next year."

"But there would be no seed-pods without bees," said Nameless. "Seed-pods would not swell, if bees did not carry the pollen on their hairy bodies from one flower to another."

The children were silent. It seemed as if the work of Nature was almost unable to go on without these little insects; and yet, every

obstacle was placed in the way of their existence.

"But," continued the little man, "we have forgotten one last and greatest danger to the hive."

"What is that?" inquired Jackie.

"Invasion by a rival hive," said Nameless. "That often happens, and is more likely than ever to do so this year, for just at the very time when the richest honey-bearing plants should have been open all day, they have had to close early because there was no sun. At a time like this, things come to a crisis, and when no more honey can be gathered, an expedition is formed against a rival hive, which ends in victory for one side or the other, and the victors carry off their rivals' store."

"That seems very cruel!" said Vi. "Besides, it's stealing, isn't it, Jackie?"

"But the bees must live," replied Nameless. "It is far better to have one hive well stocked, than two that are half empty."

This, again, was a hard nut to crack. Nameless continued his discussion—

"I cannot conceal from you that this hive is very badly stocked at present. The cold wind and rain have injured a great many of the flowers which contain the most honey. Even now, the poor workers are compelled to look, not for honey, but 'honey dew,' as it is called

—a sticky, sweet liquid, which they secure from the little green flies on rose-trees, and elsewhere.

“The Queen Mother still continues to lay her eggs, which are regularly hatched; and with the hatching come more eager mouths, which must be filled. So you see that the hive is just now threatened with famine, and that your dear bees will shortly starve to death. Every day the workers have to toil harder, and yet scarcely fill the cells which are to be their store against the frost and cold of winter.”

Just then the Baron, who had been buzzing about the hive in a state of melancholy apprehension, came up with a very important piece of news.

“I say!” he exclaimed. “Have you heard the news? They are going to make a raid upon one of the hives at the farm. The scouts have been out, and have just brought back information that there is a queenless hive there. The Queen got killed by a bird when on the Royal Progress, and they have no other to take her place. So all the workers who can be spared are going out to see if they can’t secure the honey.”

Jackie was delighted at the prospect of a fight.

“When are they going?” he said eagerly.  
“I should so like to see it.”

"To-morrow afternoon," replied the Baron.

"Oh, Nameless! You will take us to see it, won't you?" Jackie implored.

Vi hesitated. She was not fond of the continual scenes of violence and bloodshed which seemed so terribly frequent in the life of the hive.

The little man gave his consent. "Only," he added, "you must be very careful not to get stung, for there will be a hard fight, I fear. The workers will defend their hive to the utmost of their power."

Next day, Jackie's condition was one of feverish anxiety. Before, when he had gone to the hive, his impatience had been more a matter of curiosity; but on this occasion the prospect of a fight lent an additional zest to the expedition. Fighting and bloodshed had for him, as it has for most boys, a particular charm and attraction.

Vi was uneasy. To her, there was something unutterably sad and brutal in this war of bees in their struggle for existence. Still, she felt unable to resist the impulse which drove her to witness the raid.

Nameless was faithful to his promise, and, quite early in the afternoon, they went to the hive, to see the raiders start on their expedition. The bees seemed nervous and excited, as if feeling doubtful of the honesty of their purpose.

They went and came about the hive, signalling to one another with their antennæ, arranging who should remain to guard the hive, who should undertake the duty of nurses, and otherwise leaving everything in perfect order before they set out.

At length all was ready, and the scouts sailed away to bring news of the threatened hive. For the moment, the rain, which had been incessant for some days, had ceased, and the sun shone fair and clear. This, at all events, favoured the invaders, for the workers of the other hive would be mainly absent on their long and often fruitless search for honey.

Jackie, Vi, Nameless, and the Baron—whom they had persuaded to accompany them—hurried off to the farm to watch the progress of events. It was evident that the attack was not expected, for the workers were going in and out upon their various errands, thinking only of the honey which must be secured to save them from starvation. Around the door lounged several drones, basking in the sun; the ventilators and Amazons were in their places.

“What a shame,” said Vi, “to break up their happy hive, just as they are all so busy, and when they have no Queen! It’s not fair!”

“It’s quite fair,” buzzed the Baron. “If we

were weak and had no Queen, they would do the same to us."

"Here they come!" shouted Jackie, who had been watching anxiously to see the arrival of the invading force.

Looking towards their own garden, they saw the bees approaching in a scattered crowd, which, however, began to close up its ranks as they neared the object of their flight.

"Now for it!" said Jackie, excitedly, as the little army began to circle towards the doorway.

But the sentinels had already divined the nature



The raid.

of the expedition, and given warning to those workers, nurses, and even waxmakers, who were inside the hive. Without a moment's delay all relinquished their duties, and waxmakers, sweepers, Amazons, and ventilators came crowding out of the door to repel the attack.

The invaders had not looked for this. They had hoped to overpower the guard and enter the hive before the warning could have been given: instead of which, they found an army ready to face them and dispute their entrance.

But this did not daunt them. Gathering their forces together, they rushed to the assault.

The defenders apparently foresaw the movement, for—leaving the waxmakers, who were heavy and sleepy, and therefore unfitted for rapid flight, to act as a guard to the door—they flung themselves upon their assailants, and a fierce fight took place in the air.

It was a terrible struggle. The invaders charged the line of defenders, who, poised on their wings, had halted, hovering before their beloved hive. The two contending foes swayed to and fro in the air, the bees gripping and seizing one another with their claws, plunging their deadly stings into their enemies' bodies. Victor and vanquished often fell together dead,





“ “A fierce fight took place in the air.”

locked in the strenuous clutch of that fearful struggle for supremacy.

Things began to look black for the attacking party, for the workers returning to the hive saw from afar the danger which threatened their home. Hastily gathering themselves together, they swept upon the invaders, besetting them in rear and throwing their lines into confusion.

"They're beaten!" cried Jackie. "I'm sure they are!"

The Baron looked serious: the prospect of honey seemed very remote.

"I don't think they are," replied Nameless, who was anxiously watching the combatants.

The little man was right. Finding themselves attacked on two sides, the invaders withdrew to a safe distance, to re-form their ranks before again attempting the capture of the hive.

What a sight the ground presented! In every direction were scattered the bodies of the opposing forces: some rigid in death, others faintly buzzing as they writhed in their last agony.

The loss of life had been awful.

"Are they going away?" asked Vi, who saw the temporary retreat of the invading hive with some satisfaction, and hoped that the battle was now over.

“Not for long,” replied Nameless. “They are only going to try a new plan.”

So the first engagement of the battle ended, and the children anxiously waited to see how it would finish.



## CHAPTER XII

### THE SUCCESS OF THE RAID—A RIVAL QUEEN— PREPARATIONS FOR A ROYAL BATTLE

“TELL me,” said Jackie; “how can the bees of one hive distinguish those of another? Do they never kill any of their own side when they are fighting?”

The Baron was ready with an answer. “That is quite a simple matter,” he said. “All bees have a peculiar smell; each hive has its own distinct perfume; and we can always recognise a stranger bee by his scent.”

Jackie looked incredulous, and cast a glance at Nameless.

“It’s quite true,” said the latter. “I have heard of a man who was able to unite two hives, one of which had lost its Queen.”

“How did he do it?” asked Vi. “He must have been very clever.”

“It was quite easy,” said Nameless. “He scented the bees of both hives with peppermint, and put them all together. They were so confused by the new smell that they couldn’t

tell friends from foes, and so decided to work together as one hive, and not trouble themselves about fighting at all."

"Here they come again!" buzzed the Baron, who was getting quite excited about the issue of the struggle, forgetting all his lazy ways. "Now, then; death or victory!" he buzzed, as the ranks of the invaders swept forward to meet the now sadly diminished forces of the queenless hive.

This time the attack was partly aimed at the waxmaker guard who protected the door, and partly at the line of defenders hovering in front of the hive. The assault upon the waxmakers was entirely successful, for they were heavy and sleepy and unable to repel the spirited onslaught made upon them. At the same time the conquerors began to pile their dead bodies in front of the door, narrowing the entrance to such an extent that the defenders could only enter in comparatively small numbers.

On the other hand, the fight in the air had been raging furiously, and the defenders driven back to the hive. Here they saw the terrible havoc which had been wrought upon the guard. Eagerly surmounting the pile of bodies, they crept into the hive, there to continue their losing fight; for by this time it was

quite evident that the fortune of war was against them.

Gradually all the combatants were drawn inside, and the children could hear nothing but the infuriated buzz of the two parties, as they struggled through the waxen streets within the hive, dealing destruction as they went.

Jackie was most eager to enter, but Nameless prevented him.

"No, no, my boy," said he; "you must not take the risk. However, I don't think the fight can last much longer."

Vi was surprised, for she could hear the opposing parties raging inside with renewed vigour.

The Baron seemed perfectly contented. "The day is ours," he said. "They cannot stand long against us in those quarters."

Indeed, as he spoke, there was a hush, as if the hive had surrendered at discretion to the invaders.

"It's all over," said Nameless. "Our side has won."

"How do you know?" asked Jackie.

"You will see in a minute," replied their little friend; and as he spoke, a band of bees began to clear away from the doorway the heaped-up bodies of the guard, where a busy crowd of ants had collected, hoping for some share in the loot of the hive.

"Why are the ants coming up?" said Vi.

"They've come to get any pickings they can secure," replied the Baron. "They are terribly fond of honey, and know they will get a chance of some of our leavings when the removal takes place."

"And what is that?" said Vi.

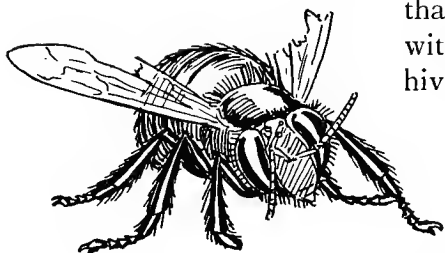
"RE-moval!" he echoed. "Don't you know what a removal is? Why—now that our workers have captured the hive—they will transfer all the honey from this place to our



own store-rooms. The ants will clean up after we have gone, and very likely come in to-night, when we are back in our own hive, and help themselves. We shall have to be very quick at getting it in, I can tell you, otherwise the Death's Head, wasps and hornets, rats, mice, and hundreds of other loafers, will be after it."

"But," said Vi, "surely you will leave a little for the poor bees whose hive you are robbing?"

The Baron was much amused. "Leave any for them!" he went on, with a big, fat buzz. "Why should we? Don't you know



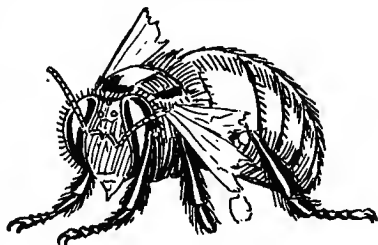
that they will come with us and join our hive?"

"Really!" said Jackie. "After you have killed all their brothers and sisters?"

"Of course," replied Nameless. "They will come into our hive, to fill up the ranks of those who have been killed," and he pointed to the many bodies that lay on the ground; and to the hive, whence the bees were now carrying those who had fallen in the fight within, and flinging them outside, that they might the more readily remove their spoil.

"Come along inside," continued Nameless, "and you will see that what I have just told you is true."

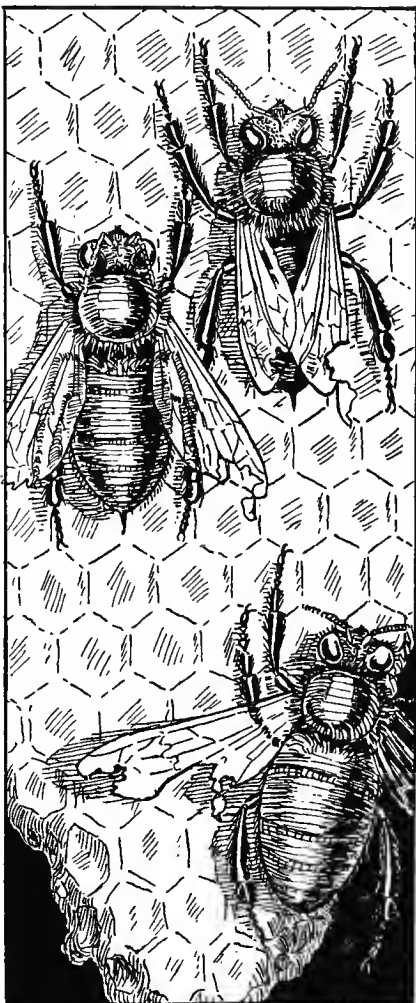
They climbed over the dead bodies which still encumbered the doorway, and entered the defeated hive. The battle must have been a terrible one, for all around lay lifeless bees, while on the comb, high above their heads, were others, stung to death, but clinging to it with their claws, which even death had not loosed. From





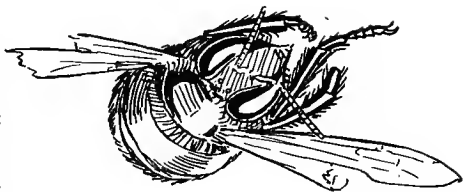
time to time a gang, by dint of pushing and biting away the wax to which the bodies clung, would release one, sending it down to the floor with a dull thud.

Others, again, were broaching the golden store, and, with distended honey bags, flying away to their own hive to bestow it in safety. But what astonished the children most of all was the cheerful spirit with which the vanquished bees took part in all this labour, and helped to plunder the hive they had striven so hard



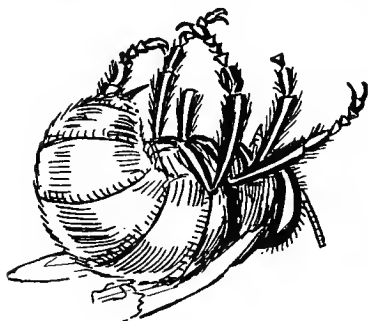
“Clinging to it with their claws, which even death had not loosed.”

to protect. In a few brief moments all had become peace and tranquillity, and but for the terrible signs of the struggle in the shape of dead warriors, they could hardly have imagined there had been a fight at all.



As it was growing late, Nameless was obliged to take the children home, for which Vi was really thankful. To her, at all events, the afternoon had been a sad one.

For several days neither Jackie nor Vi were able to go out, owing to the rain, and this caused them the keenest anxiety, particularly as they remembered that another Queen would soon be ready to leave its cocoon. Besides, they felt that the wet days, however irksome to themselves, must now be a cause of great



alarm to the provident little bees, who were being so persistently deprived of their chance of gathering in a sufficient store for the winter, and for the ever growing number of mouths

which would have to be fed. At length there came a break in the leaden clouds, and they were able to go out, but with strict injunctions not to walk upon the damp grass.

What a treat it was, and how fresh every-



thing seemed, after their enforced confinement in the schoolroom! Above all, how welcome was the cheery face of their little friend Nameless, which peered out at them from the depths of the big holly bush which stood by the path!

"I thought you'd be coming out to-day," he said. "I have been waiting, that I may take you to see our friends at the hive. I fear we shall not pay many more visits, as I fancy they will soon go to sleep for the winter."

"Oh," said Vi, "I am so sorry! But why is that?"

"There are many reasons," replied Nameless. "First of all, want of honey; secondly, want of strength. The battle at the farm was a terrible one, and the hive lost very severely. Then, again, there are three or four young Queens who will shortly be hatched, and not enough bees to provide them with a swarm. Even if a swarm did take place, they would be unable to collect sufficient honey. So the council of the hive has decided to end the year's work and prepare at once for the winter."

"What will they do?" asked Jackie.

"That we shall see later on," replied Nameless. "For the present we must be content to await the course of events," and with that they hurried off to the hive.

When they arrived, Jackie and Vi at once saw that Nameless was right in saying the battle had been a terrible one. The hive had been victorious, it was true, but at the cost of many valuable lives, which even the surplus workers from the vanquished hive could not replace. In addition to the honey gained by

the expedition, there was the additional strain of the up-keep of the vanquished drones, who had established themselves as pensioners on the hive, thus adding to the number of useless mouths.

"What a lot of drones!" said Jackie. "Where can they have come from?"

"Those are our former enemies," said the Baron, who had just come up. "We have had to give them shelter here. They are a very decent set of fellows, but terribly greedy! They will eat us out of house and home if we are not very careful."

There was an air of despondency and impending gloom in the hive. The workers who were still gathering the remnant of honey left in the captured hive, seemed to lack the spirit of eager bustle they had exhibited during the early summer. They were evidently face to face with an alarming crisis. To add to their anxiety, the low, plaintive voice of an imprisoned Princess once again rang out in the hive.

"Hark!" said Jackie, who was as excited as any of the bees. "The Princess has just burst her cocoon. Listen!"

Again the imprisoned Princess besought the Royal nurses to release her, and for the second time the children heard the harsh, shrill tones of the reigning Sovereign shriek out in bold

defiance of the new comer. The period of revolution had again begun.

"Oh, dear!" said Vi. "What will they do? There are not half enough bees to make another swarm."

"And if they did swarm," said Jackie, "there is no honey to be got now."

The situation was, indeed, a critical one, and the bees seemed fully conscious of its gravity, for they instantly began to consult one another. The Baron pressed forward to hear how they proposed to settle the difficulty.

"A rival! a rival!" shrieked the Queen, as madly jealous as her mother had been, and rushing eagerly in the direction of the Royal cell. The bees were uncertain how to act. Should they permit a second swarm? If so, their hive would be weakened, and they would fall an easy prey to another and stronger one.

Once more the imprisoned Princess implored deliverance from her cell. The Queen Mother rushed towards it with feverish haste, her curved sting ready to be plunged into her daughter's body. The nurses and maids of honour beat her off, for the voice of the hive had not yet spoken.

The deliberation was an animated one, and the bees seemed uncertain as to how they should act; but at length the Baron returned to his friends.

"They have decided," said he, "that there cannot possibly be another swarm. The Queen and her daughter will fight for the hive."

Jackie was deeply interested. "Are they going to fight each other?" he asked.

"Yes," replied the Baron. "The hive has decided that, whichever wins, shall rule, and will remain Queen till next year."

"How horrid!" said Vi. "They are always wanting to fight! Still, I am not sorry for the Queen Mother, because, after all, she turned her own mother out of the hive when the swarm left. But I should have thought they could live together quietly, without always wanting to kill each other."

"It is the law of the hive," said Nameless, "and we must bow before it."

The Queen Mother evidently heard the decision of the hive, for she suffered herself to be calmed by her maids of honour. Occasionally uttering her challenge, she awaited the arrival of her offspring. The bees began to show signs of great excitement, and the workers, who had returned with their loads, after discharging them into the cells, joined the throng, which seemed keenly to enter into the idea of a fight.

Meanwhile, under the direction of the architect, the door of the Royal cell had been

opened, and the imprisoned Princess emerged from her seclusion. She was instantly tended by the nurses and fed with honey, to prepare her for the ordeal by battle.

"Is she going to fight at once?" said Vi. "Won't they even give her time to get strong and used to the hive?"

"No," said Nameless; "there will be time enough for that if she overcomes her mother, who herself, you must remember, is not very strong, on account of the thousands of eggs she has laid."

The bees had all gathered together on the floor of the hive to watch the fight, and seemed to be deeply interested in the preparations. Even the drones caught the excitement of the workers, and pushed their way through the crowds in order to secure good places. The period of challenges was over, and the time for real fighting had come.

Mother and daughter—Queen and Princess—each advanced, escorted by her maids of honour, who, as they entered the lists, stood aside to allow their respective Royal mistresses to pass.



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE STRUGGLE FOR SUPREMACY—SLAUGHTER OF THE IMPERIAL FAMILY—A ROYAL FUNERAL

JACKIE was in a state of great excitement. “See,” he cried, seizing Nameless by the hand, “how furious they look!”

“Oh, Jackie, how horrid you are!” exclaimed Vi, who, although she hated to see these scenes of violence, could not tear herself away from the spot, being held there by a kind of fascination she could not explain.

The two Queens eyed one another, each fully realizing that the struggle between them was to be one of life or death. This disposed them to be cautious in attack; yet their eyes were blazing with hate, and their long, fat bodies nervously working with excitement. Each sharp, curved sting protruded now and again, as if ready to be plunged into their adversary's body.

Meanwhile the expectant crowd grew more and more eager, and began to excite and encourage the rival Queens to commence

hostilities ; though, indeed, neither required much incentive to begin. Suddenly the old Queen, who had been cautiously crawling round her daughter, rose in the air and furiously flung herself upon her opponent, trying to drive her



The fight of the Queens.

sting into her rival's body. The latter, quickly detecting the manœuvre, dexterously flew aside to avoid the attack.

“Bravo!” shouted Jackie.

Nothing daunted, the old Queen again made

another vicious dash at her daughter, and again she failed. Then she withdrew for a moment to recover her composure. Meanwhile the Princess, being but recently hatched, and unused to hive life, remained nervous and trembling, content only to avoid the onslaught of her mother. Her maids of honour, crowding round, encouraged and reassured her.

"Poor thing!" said Vi. "It's all so strange and new to her, that she seems hardly able to understand why she is being attacked."

"Oh, yes, she does," replied Nameless. "You'll see that she will soon grow used to the fighting, and hold her own."

The encouragement of her subjects, who seemed to regard the fight as a great sporting event, redoubled the venomous fury of the Queen Mother. The lust of hate was in her eyes as she resumed her wild, but fruitless, attack upon her offspring, who remained content to move deftly aside and allow her parent to exhaust herself by violent tactics.

This was most successful, for the Queen Mother was shortly again forced to rest, completely exhausted after one of her assaults. This time, instead of waiting quietly for the next onslaught, the young Princess suddenly and unexpectedly rushed forward to the attack, and completely turned the tables upon her mother the Queen, who, hastily breaking

through the circle of her subjects, fled to seek safety in some secluded corner of the hive.

"Oh, she's gone! I suppose she'll just fly away quite quietly, and there will be no more fighting?" said Vi, who was delighted to think there was a chance of the duel being ended.

But the bees themselves showed that it was far from their intention to allow the Queen Mother to escape. Spent by her previous exertions, she buzzed about the hive in her wrath, and the bees, seeing her disinclination to fight, sent a guard after her, which drove her back to the lists to meet her daughter, now infuriated, and stimulated by success.

The Queen of the Hive meekly bowed to the law and will of her subjects, and returned to renew the struggle. Jackie was quite pleased to see that the fight was likely to continue.

"I think the old Queen a regular coward," said he, "to run away like that! I'm sure none of her subjects would dream of doing it if the hive was attacked; and I hope the young Princess will win, so there!"

The old Queen seemed to feel that in running away she had offended the pride of her swarm and forfeited their respect. She now endeavoured, by the fury of her repeated rushes, to wipe out the disgrace that a moment

of cowardice had brought upon her. But, as much as she had lost confidence in her own powers, so had the Princess' courage increased; and thus the fight progressed, both combatants rising and flying at each other, seeking to seize one another with their claw-like feet, in order that the death-blow from their curved stings might, once and for all, put an end to the conflict.

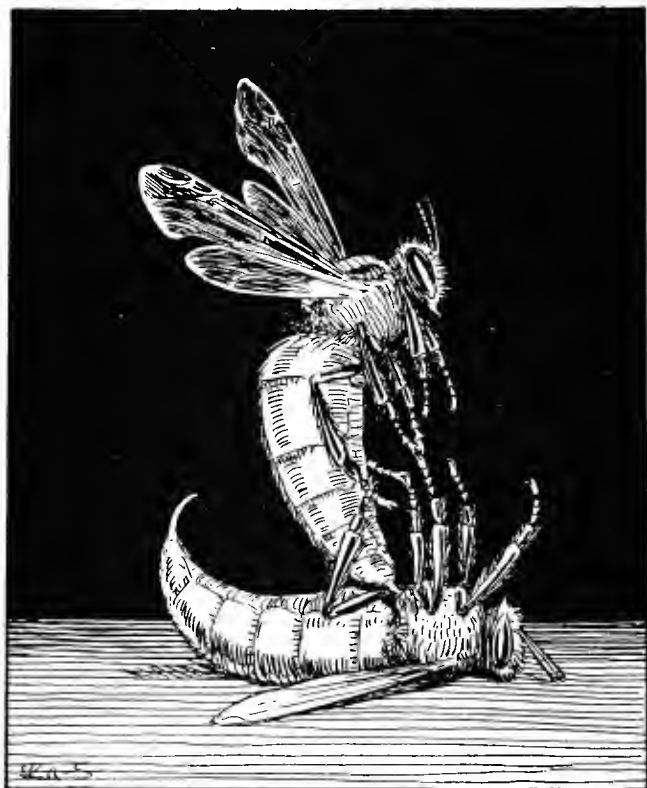
"I say!" remarked Jackie. "Doesn't it remind you of two cocks fighting in the poultry yard?"

Once more the strength of the Queen Mother seemed to fail her, and once more she turned tail, to seek safety and rest in flight. Instantly her maids of honour went in pursuit, and resolutely pulled her back to her place in the ring.

Victory for the Princess now seemed certain. The Queen Mother, exhausted by her breathless and fruitless attacks, seemed to realise that her end was near, and fought with the fury of despair; while her daughter each moment appeared to grow stronger and more determined. At last the end came.

The old Queen, worn out, fell down on the floor, and rolled upon her back. The Princess now saw her advantage, and plunged her deadly sting, deep and sure, into the fat body of her mother. The wound was a ghastly one,

and the poison of the sting rendered it all the more fatal. In an instant the Queen was dead,



“Plunged her deadly sting, deep and sure, into the fat body  
of her mother.”

and, while her body yet quivered, the drones  
broke out into a deep hum—

“Hail to the Queen !”

"Oh," said Vi; "how horrible! These poor Queens seem to have nothing but hardships and sorrows!"

Nameless smiled. "It is the penalty of greatness," said he; "and the law of the hive!"

"Look," said Jackie, "how eager they all are to welcome their new Queen!"

Such, indeed, was the case. The body of the late Queen, who had been so carefully tended, and for whose sake so many faithful workers had lost their lives, lay where it had fallen, uncared for and unmourned by her many subjects, who, but a few hours before, would have guarded and defended her to the death. The Baron, who had taken a languid interest in the fight, now came up.

"Ah!" said he. "That's over. Quite amusing, wasn't it? though I hate a crowd. They were crushing me abominably all the time, and you know I like plenty of room." With which he swelled himself and shook his furry tail, greatly relieved to be out of such an excited throng. "Ah, well!" he continued; "another Queen! But I think there will be no more bother like this, for the hive has now decided that all the young Princesses must die."

"Oh!" exclaimed Vi. "Are they going to begin killing again? Hasn't there been enough for one day?"

"No," replied Nameless. "As usual, I think that the bees are quite right. You must remember the position: The hive is a weak one; there is not much honey, and there are many drones who want to be fed."

"Of course, of course," said the Baron. "We must be fed."

"Very well," continued the little man, smiling at the Baron's remark. "Every Princess who is hatched will be a source of danger. She may lead the hive to a second swarm, which you already know would be fatal; or she would in any case have to fight the present Queen, so that the whole hive would be in a constant state of revolution, and what would be the result?"

"I don't know," replied Jackie.

"Why, don't you see," Nameless explained, "that the bees would be so continually disturbed by these battles that their work would suffer, for no bee could be expected to resist such a sight as a royal duel. As I said before, they have very sensibly decided that the era of revolution must now cease, and the remaining days of summer be devoted to work."

Meanwhile, the victorious Queen was hailed with joy by the hive. Workers, drones, nurses—in fact, every bee in the waxen city—had gathered round their new Sovereign, each striving to honour her, while she stood aside,



breathless and dazed by her victory. Already there seemed to be a complete understanding between her and her subjects.

But her conquest was not complete, nor her reign secure, so long as the Imperial brood of young Princesses lived. The law of the hive had decreed that, for the common prosperity, they must all die ; and that, as the new Queen's reign had begun in blood, so must it continue, until all possible rivals were slain. The time for congratulations was past, and the period of action had come. As the children watched the young Queen, they saw the triumph of victory in her eyes replaced by the lust of death and destruction. She was to be the executioner of the hive's decree.

Slowly the Queen turned to begin her dread task. The bowing maids of honour marched before, while the drones, with their deep hum, hovered around her. Nameless and the children followed.

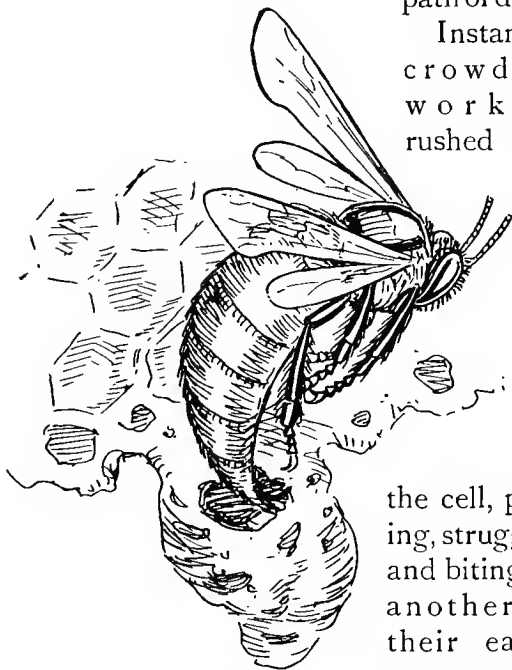
The crowd halted at the first royal cell, the maids of honour standing aside. The Queen was face to face with the grub which might one day prove her rival.

"Poor little thing !" said Vi. "Why should she kill it ? It has done her no harm !"

As for the doomed victim itself, it was unconscious of its approaching fate, and continued placidly to devour the royal jelly which the

nurses had plentifully supplied for its nourishment. In a moment its soft, helpless body was transfixed by that cruel sting with its poisoned thrust, and the grub lay dead, while the Queen, callous to its sufferings, passed onward on her path of death.

Instantly a crowd of workers rushed upon



the cell, pushing, struggling and biting one another in their eagerness to secure

the royal jelly, which they licked up with their long tongues, until not a vestige was left. Then, turning their attention to the dead grub, they tossed it carelessly on to the floor of the hive, and hurried off to join the Queen. The

next cell contained an egg—an unhatched queen. A savage nip from her hard and horny jaws destroyed it.

“Isn’t she a brute!” said Jackie, who, although fond of fighting, had very strong ideas of fair play, and disliked to see the weak and helpless brood slaughtered in cold blood.

Poor Vi was too sad to speak.

The next Royal cell contained a silent cocoon—a young Queen, pale and motionless, ready to spring into life and become the mother of a hive. In an instant the workers attacked the waxen film which hid the Princess from sight. But the new Queen, mad with the fever of slaughter, could brook no delay. Turning aside the busy workers who would have removed the door, with one thrust of that deadly sting she pierced the slender wall which stood between her and her now almost perfect rival, penetrating the shroud in which the young Princess lay, and finally burying itself in her body.

With a buzz of fiendish triumph the Queen withdrew her instrument of destruction, and feverishly passed on, anxious to see if there were yet more of the Imperial brood for her to kill ; while the greedy workers eagerly tore down the door of the cell, to glut themselves on the royal jelly, which had been left as a

provision for the coming Queen, who now lay dead, killed by her own sister.

"Oh, Nameless," entreated Vi; "do let us go away! It hurts me to see the workers so hard-hearted and cruel! See, how they have flung out the dead body of that poor young Queen, in order to get at the food which they had themselves placed for her!"

"Yes," said Jackie. "I don't think much of bees. They make an enormous fuss over a Queen. As long as she can be of any assistance to them, they will attend her and supply her wants; but the moment they themselves have no use for her, they can be very cruel and unkind."

"But," argued Nameless, "in this, as in everything else, they show their economy. In storing up honey, or, for a matter of that, in making money, you will find all the world the same. Besides, as I said before, this course is for the peace of the hive, in which no one is selfish, and where each bee is ready to sacrifice its life if the general good is thereby promoted."

"Well, anyhow," retorted Jackie, "what about the drones? I don't see what benefit they are to the hive."

"Hush!" said Nameless. "Here comes our friend the Baron. We must not hurt his feelings. As the poor Don used to say:

‘Wait and see.’ I venture to assert that you will be very surprised at what becomes of them.”

They passed through the comb and the brood cells, which were now becoming more and more empty as the season advanced, and reached the floor of the hive. Here they saw the sweeper gang busily hauling away the body of the dead Queen, with as scant ceremony as if she had been a mere intruder, like the wasp they had seen killed at the gate. Others were pushing and pulling the bodies of the royal grubs and dead Princesses, and removing all traces of the day’s proceedings.

Sadly they watched the procession as it passed across the floor to the gateway, where the bodies were hastily tossed out of the hive, to furnish food for birds, or any animal which might take a fancy to them.

“Jackie,” said Vi, “we can’t let the Queen be treated like that. We will bury her and her family with Don Drone in the corner of the garden under the trees. Please, Nameless, make us big again, and we will do it.” So they hurried out of the hive, and Nameless quickly restored them to their original size.

“Come along, Vi!” said Jackie; and, stooping down, they collected the remains of the Queen and her daughters, and carried them

in their hands to the corner of the garden, where already stood a little board with the following inscription :—



“Now,” he continued, “we will wrap up the Queen in a cabbage leaf, and lay her beside the Don, and her family beside her.” Saying this, he produced from his pocket a knife, which, although wanting a blade and damaged

in other ways, served admirably for digging the little graves.

Vi went for some fresh twigs to mark the spot, as well as a few late summer flowers to lay upon the graves.

When she returned, Jackie had finished his task, and the children sorrowfully placed the flowers upon the newly made mound and stuck in the twigs, till such a time as they could secure fresh boards to record the names of their dead friends.

"Why, children! What are you doing?" said Miss Forman's voice behind them. "Oh, what a mess you are making, and what dirty hands!"

Jackie looked up solemnly. "Hush!" said he. "We've been having a funeral."

"Now come along, and let me make you tidy,"—Miss Forman strongly disapproved of games in any shape or form which involved digging—and the two children, with a sad, backward glance at the spot, walked silently to the house to be made ready for tea.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE MASSACRE OF THE DRONES

JACKIE and Vi were very busy, and the former was, to Miss Forman's great surprise, for the moment silent and deep in meditation. Vi's new desk, already somewhat shorn of its early freshness, was also very much in evidence. Both the children were deep in the throes of literary composition. The reason was not far to seek. They were engaged in the preparation of a suitable inscription, to be raised over the graves of the Royal brood whose destruction they had witnessed the day before.

Out of doors, the leaden skies were once more emptying themselves in sheets of rain, as if bewailing the untimely end of the bees' year, which, only a few months previously, had been inaugurated by such hopeful industry.

Jackie, by virtue of his seniority, had elected to compose the wording of the memorial; and to Vi was entrusted the more tedious task of transcribing the same upon the lid of an old



candle-box, which Jackie had just planed with the assistance of his carpenter's tools. The evidence of his labours lay around in the shape of a multitude of shavings, and in his flushed condition ; for Jackie's carpentry was handicapped by the exceeding bluntness of his implements, which rendered any work with them laborious but, happily, safe.

In order that the memorial might be of a more lasting nature, a purple indelible pencil had been requisitioned, and Vi's fingers and lips had already begun to display certain vivid streaks, which testified to the earnestness of her occupation and the frequent moistening of the pencil by her lips, a process which, to her, seemed to be essential to practical composition.

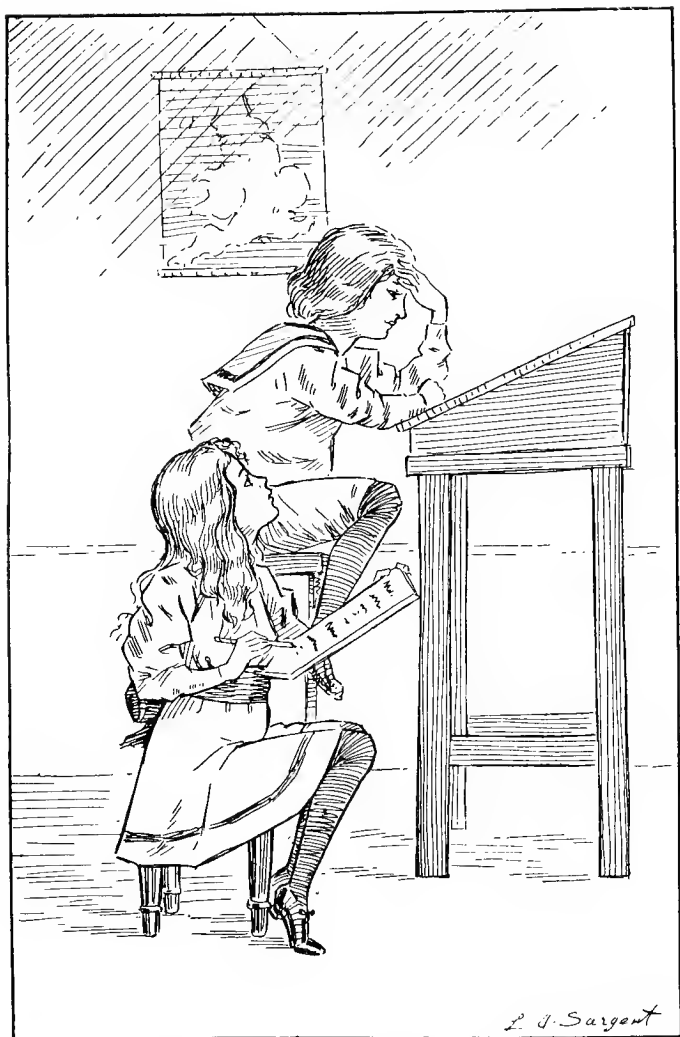
"I know how we ought to begin," said Jackie.  
 "'In memory of——'"

Vi bent over the wooden tombstone, and began slowly to write at her brother's dictation.

"'I-N, in,'" she repeated softly, as she wrote the first word.

Then, looking up, she said, "How ever do you spell memory, Jackie?"

"I don't know," he replied. "That's your business. You are to do the writing, and I'll tell you what to say."



“‘How ever do you spell memory, Jackie?’”

Vi knit her brows and concentrated her energies once more upon the board.

" 'M-E-M, mem; E-R-Y, ory. Memory!'" she said at length, regarding her work with triumph.

"Splendid!" ejaculated Jackie, as he surveyed the somewhat straggling letters with admiration.

"Well, what next?" said Vi. "In memory of whom?"

Jackie suddenly paused before replying.

"I don't know," he said, at length. "Bee Queens don't seem to have any names, like those in history."

"What shall we do, then?" asked Vi.

"I know!" cried Jackie, with a burst of inspiration. "'In memory of her most gracious Majesty the second Queen;' because, you know, she was the second Queen of our hive, wasn't she?"

"Very well. 'O-F, of,'" continued Vi, resuming her work, "'T-H-E, the——' I'll put in a big 2 and a little *nd* for 'second'; it won't take up so much room, and is easier to write."

"Stop!" said Jackie. "Aren't you going to put in 'Her Gracious Majesty'?"

"But," objected Vi, "she wasn't a bit gracious; she was very horrid!"

"I think we'd better put that in, Vi," said Jackie. "The bees mightn't like it if we left it out."

"But it wouldn't be true to call her gracious!" persisted Vi.

"Very well, then," said Jackie. "'In memory of her Majesty the second Queen of our hive.'"

"But I've already written 'second' with a big 2 and little *nd*!" remonstrated Vi. "And it won't rub out;" so she gained her point.

"Well, what else?" she demanded. "Shall we say what she died of?"

Jackie thought profoundly. "'Who was killed by her daughter the third Queen in mortal combat,'" he suggested.

"That's very long!" pleaded Vi, who was growing rather weary of her task.

"No," said Jackie, firmly; "it must go in."

There was a long pause, broken only by Vi's deep breathing as she inscribed the cause of the late Queen's death. At length it was duly recorded, and she looked up.

"'Also of,'" continued Jackie, with a burst of inspiration, "'the members of her family who were killed at the same time. The Queen killed them, Jackie and Vi buried them.'"

"Jackie, you mustn't go on so fast; I can't get it all down!" expostulated Vi.

Thus, word by word, the memorial was composed, until it was completed as follows—

“IN MEMERY OF  
THE 2nd QUEEN  
WHO WAS KILLED BY HE  
-R DORTER THE 3rd Q-  
-UEEN IN MORTUL COM-  
-BAT ALLSO OF THE  
MEMBURS OF HER  
FAMELY WHO WERE  
KILLED AT THE S-  
-AME TYME  
THE QUEEN KILED  
THEM JACKKIE AND  
VI BERYED THEM.  
P.S. SHE WAS THE  
WIFE OF DON DRONE.”

The concluding lines of the inscription were added by Vi, who felt that at least some reason ought to be advanced for the burial of the Queen beside the Don.

As may well be imagined, the memorial was not finished until teatime, and then—it being too late, and also too wet, for them to go out—was carefully put away in the toy cupboard, in the hope that the next day would prove finer, and give the children the opportunity of placing it over the graves of the late Royal Family.

“Good gracious, Vi! What have you been

doing with that pencil?" said Miss Forman, eyeing with horror Vi's purple lips, fingers, and sundry blotches and streaks on her pinafore, acquired in her endeavour to wipe away the traces of her recent occupation.


"I've only been writing," answered Vi, as she was led off to be washed and reclothed in a fresh pinafore.

Fortune favoured the children on the following day, for it was not only fine, but the sun peeped out to dry the paths and grass, which was a matter for great congratulation for both Jackie and Vi, who were looking forward to the task of erecting their memorial with due solemnity.

As soon as they had finished dinner, the children hurried off to the corner of the garden where they had established their little bee cemetery, Vi carrying the board, and Jackie armed with his spade, which he had fetched from the tool-house.

"Now, Vi," began Jackie, "you go and collect a nice lot of pebbles in your bucket, while I make a big mound over the graves. We can stick them all over it so as to look pretty, just as we did at the seaside last year."

Vi was delighted with the idea, and ran off in search of pebbles, while Jackie, taking off his coat as he had seen Charles do, proceeded to pile up quite a respectable heap of earth



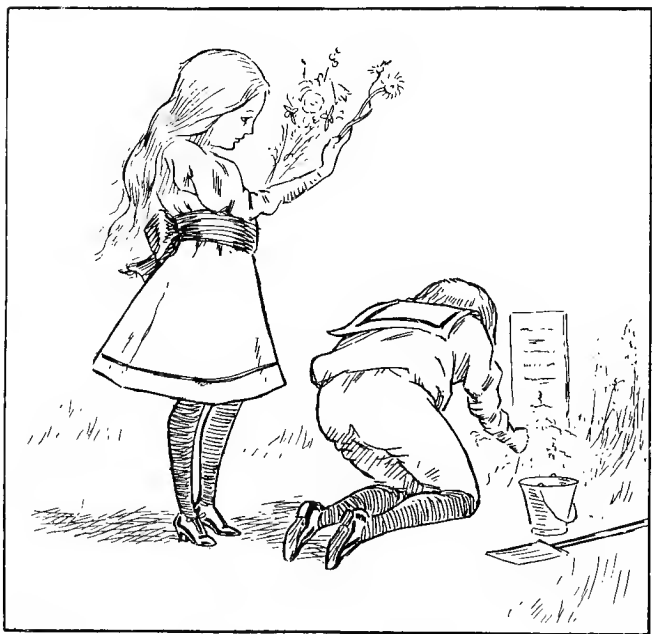
over the graves of the defunct Queen and her relatives; by which time Vi had returned. Both children derived a considerable amount of consolation from the act of patting and



"Vi carrying the board, and Jackie armed with his spade."

slapping the mound with Jackie's spade until it was quite firm and solid—the sound seemed so comforting. Then the board was carefully set up in the midst, and the whole covered

with bits of broken flower-pot and the pebbles which Vi had collected. The result was evidently pleasing, for both children stepped back to get a better view of their work and to judge of its effect.



Jackie and Vi bury the Queen

After gazing for some time they were somewhat alarmed to see Nameless peering at them over the top of the board. They had not expected to see him in this part of the garden.

"Very pretty indeed!" he said, with a



pleasant smile; "and very good of you, as well, to give a thought to the poor dead Queen and the Princesses. But I want you to come again with me to the hive to-day, for the last time, I am sorry to say."

"Oh!" cried both children, looking very disappointed.

"Are you going away?" added Vi.

"No," said the little man; "but the bee season is over, and after to-day there will be nothing more to see in the hive till the spring; and so, as I have no more to teach you, I must return to Elf-land."

"I am so sorry," said Jackie, "because I've enjoyed going with you ever so much more than going out for stupid walks with Miss Forman! Won't you ever come and see us again?"

"Oh, yes; do!" said Vi.

"I cannot say," replied their little friend, with a sigh. "But now we must be going to the hive."

When they arrived at their destination it was evident that another very important event was about to take place; for, as was usual when excited, the workers were signalling to each other with their antennæ, and crowding together in a state of restless animation.

"What's the matter now?" asked Jackie, who had learned to detect the signs of the hive. "They are going to do something, I

can see. Are they going to attack another hive?"

Nameless shook his head.

"Is the Queen going on a Royal Progress?" asked Vi.

Again Nameless shook his head.

"What is it, then?" demanded Jackie.

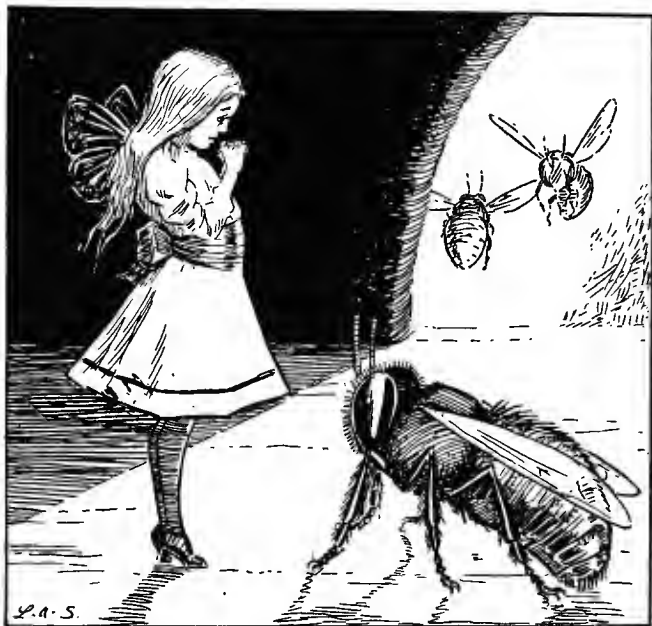
Nameless grew very grave indeed, and said, "Children, you are about to see a very terrible sight: the slaughter of the drones. I have not spoken of it before, because I feared it might make you sad. Now that the season is over and swarming has ceased, all the drones will be killed, because they are useless and eat so much that the store would not be sufficient to keep them throughout the winter. Now, every useless mouth must be got rid of, and for the next few days, short as they are, work alone must be considered. I would not have brought you here to-day but for the fact that I felt you ought to see, to the very end, the life and customs of the bees, in whom you have been so deeply interested."

"Oh," said Vi, "there is to be more killing! How dreadfully cruel they are!"

"It is kinder than starvation," returned Nameless. "Besides, if the drones were to live, the whole hive might perish from hunger; and then there would be no bees at all next year. Think of that!"

This aspect of the case had not struck the children.

"Baron Buzz—will they kill him too?" asked Jackie.



"I'm so sorry, so very sorry, to hear that they are going to kill you."

"Yes," replied Nameless. "Even he must be sacrificed."

At this moment the Baron came up. "Good afternoon," said he.

"Oh, Baron!" cried Vi, whose tears had

begun to fall, "I'm so sorry, so very sorry, to hear that they're going to kill you!"

The Baron regarded Vi with astonishment. "What?" he screamed. "Kill me?—Absurd!—Ridiculous!" for he, like his brother drones, was in blissful ignorance of his impending fate.

Meanwhile the drones were contentedly dozing in corners of the hive, or lazily licking up the precious store which had cost so much to gather, while the workers, in little knots, jealously eyed the havoc they were making in their store-room.

Nameless drew Vi aside. "You see," remarked he, "the drones, being only hatched this year, know nothing of what is in store for them. Having been well treated throughout the summer, they think their position in the hive is a safe one."

Jackie, who had been thinking deeply, suddenly turned to Nameless. "But they won't be able to fight," he said. "They've got no stings."

"That will make no difference," replied Nameless. "I doubt if any of the workers will care to risk their stings in killing a mere drone. The little horny jaws you have seen them use in building the comb will be quite strong enough to serve their purpose."

Meanwhile the excitement of the workers was increasing. Gathered together in groups,

they watched the drones with an ever-increasing feeling of rage. It only needed a small incident to set the hive in an uproar ; and this soon came.

One of the drones, who had been feeding till he could eat no more, was crawling lazily away to a corner where he could sleep, when he pushed against one of the workers. Instantly the worker turned upon him, and bit at him savagely, tearing his beautiful filmy wing. The drone set up a buzz of rage, and rushed at the worker who had dared to touch him.

A crowd of workers immediately fell upon him, and in a moment he fluttered to the bottom of the hive, where he lay, his wings slit to ribbons, and his fat, silky body torn in deep gashes by his angry assailants.

This incident served to rouse the other workers to a state of fury, and a general rush was made upon the drones, who, seeing themselves outnumbered, fled from street to street of the waxen city, to escape from their infuriated pursuers. But wherever they went they encountered fresh search-parties, who rushed upon them, biting and tearing in a frenzy of destruction. It was a scene of indescribable confusion—everywhere drones, wounded and panic-stricken, striving to escape and constantly finding their retreat cut off.

The chase was then continued in the upper



The slaughter of the drones.

parts of the hive, until the drones, seeing that nothing remained for them but instant flight, eagerly pressed forward towards the door, where the reinforced guard of Amazons drove them back. Their cry—no longer the rich, full hum with which they had chanted their song of joy to the young Queen—was now a shrill shriek of pain and anguish: The workers, having hunted the drones from all the upper parts of the hive, descended upon the writhing crowd below, and with implacable fury began to bite and maim the drones, ruthlessly tearing off their limbs in a horrible orgie of carnage.

Vi had crept away to a corner and hidden her face, terror-stricken at the merciless massacre, while Jackie was expostulating with Nameless.

“Cowards!” he cried. “To set upon a lot of drones, who have no stings. They are more than three to one; and it isn’t fair!”

“Hush!” said the little man. “You can do no good,” and so they waited, more or less patiently, to see the end.

Presently Vi heard a feeble buzz beside her, and, turning, saw poor Baron Buzz who, having eluded his pursuers, had crawled painfully towards her on three legs.

What a spectacle he presented! A bite had broken one of his wings, which hung limply down, and his body bore the marks of many fierce attacks; three of his legs had been

nipped off, while his large eyes were dim with the haze of approaching death.

"Dear lady," he said, in a feeble voice, "I have crept here to die, and save myself the further pain of the slaughter below.

"Jackie," he continued, turning to her brother; "do not, I beg, be angry with the workers in their task of destruction. They are but doing their duty, and the law of the hive has willed that we should perish. Do not grieve for me, for I die cheerfully and gladly, because in our death I know the hive will live—live to become the parent of many others, when the cold and gloomy winter shall have passed and spring returns once more. After all, how can a drone discharge his duty better than by giving his life for the hive? You may call us lazy, greedy, and idle; but remember, children, that Nature has given to us no means of working. To us belongs no honey bag, or wax pockets; no sting. But what we have—our lives—we cheerfully lay down—for—the—hive."

His voice failed as he concluded, and he fell back dead. He would have dropped to the ground had not Jackie and Vi caught him.

"Poor Baron!" said the latter. "After all, there is some nobility even in a drone! They can't help it if Nature does not give them stings and means of working. But, oh, Nameless!



do let us take him away and bury him with the others. He was a good friend to us, and I should hate to think the birds were going to



“‘I die cheerfully and gladly.’”

eat him up, as I suppose they will all the other drones.”

Meantime, the struggling crowd of workers had become still. The drones had all perished, and the sweepers were busily engaged in throwing the dead bodies out of the hive. Suddenly,

however, a band of workers rushed to the brood cells. "What are they going to do there?" inquired Jackie.

"This is the last scene in the drama," replied Nameless. "All the baby drones are to be killed!"



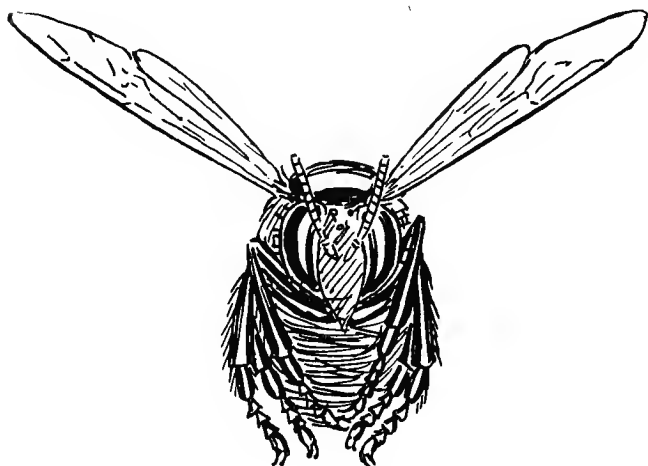
"Dragging with them the body of the poor Baron."

In a moment the drone cells were attacked, and eggs, grubs, and cocoons mercilessly destroyed and thrown down, till not one grub, cocoon, or egg remained. The drone family was extinct.

It was wonderful to see how quickly—now that the work of destruction was over—the

bees cleared away the bodies, and effaced all signs of the slaughter that had just taken place. The drone cells were swept out, and left clean and ready for the reception of such honey as was still procurable; and by the time the children, dragging with them the body of the poor Baron, had arrived on the floor, they found hardly a trace of the afternoon's tragedy. But when they reached the door of the hive they saw the ground littered with drones, some dead, but many lingering in agony as they lay on the earth below.

It did not take them long to resume their natural size, when, taking the Baron's body in her hand, Vi, with Jackie, hastened away to their cemetery.



## CHAPTER XV—AND LAST

### WHICH EXPLAINS MUCH

NAMELESS lovingly followed the children to their little cemetery, for, during the few short months he had known them, he had learned—as far as an Elf-man can be said to learn—to love them, and to enjoy the wonder which the life in the hive used to awake in their minds. Now that his task was over, he felt a certain regret.

Jackie's knife soon hollowed out a respectable grave beside the larger monument to the Royal Family and that of Don Drone, and the mutilated body of the Baron was laid therein with much regret by both children, on whom his parting words had made a deep impression.

Nameless lingered by the grave. "Now, children," said he, "I fear that I, too, shall soon have to leave you. It grieves me deeply to do so, for I have had much pleasure in your company, and in explaining to you the life history of the hive. But I, like the bees, must obey the law; and that of Elf-land is every

bit as strict as that of the hive which, you have seen, demands such terrible and unquestioning obedience."

"Oh, Nameless!" cried Vi. "Must you go? I don't know what we shall do without you. It won't be a bit nice under the cedar tree now, will it, Jackie?"

"I should think not!" replied her brother.

"But the autumn is coming on," continued Nameless, "and you won't be able to go to the cedar tree. You will have to go for walks, or stay with Miss Forman in the schoolroom."

"Yes, I know!" responded Jackie, impatiently; "and that's the worst of all, because we have to read stupid old books. It isn't half so jolly as going out with you to see the hive."

"But, Nameless," said Vi, "you've never told us about yourself. Who are you, really? And why won't you tell us your name? I know that 'Nameless' can't be your real one."

The little man laughed uneasily. "Well, children," he replied, "I won't say good-bye to you now. I will get permission from Elf-land to see you to-morrow. Then, perhaps, I may be allowed to tell you the history of my life. So run away to Miss Forman, and meet me then as usual."

"Oh, thanks!" shouted Vi. "We will be sure to come," and off they ran to the house.

The little man looked sadly after them till they were out of sight ; then flinging himself down beside the newly-made grave of Baron Buzz, he burst into a wild torrent of weeping, which, for an Elf, was altogether an unusual proceeding.

Their spare time next morning was employed by the children in constructing a memorial tablet for their friend the Baron.



As usual, the task of recording the inscription was deputed to Vi, who this time had failed to procure a violet pencil, owing to her injudicious use of it on the former occasion. She had, however, obtained a red-and-blue chalk one, with which she proposed to execute her task, and embellish the monument in a manner befitting so devoted a victim as the late Baron.

After much consultation the tablet was completed, and read as follows—

“IN MEMERY  
OF  
BAREN BUZZ  
WHO DIED FOR  
THE HIVE  
BERVED BY  
JACKIE AN-  
-D VI.”

This was further decorated with sundry scrolls and flourishes in red and blue, which gave it quite an artistic appearance.

After dinner, the children lost no time in getting Jackie's spade and Vi's bucket—which they had already filled with pebbles—to complete the decoration of the Baron's last resting-place. Arrived at the cemetery, Jackie speedily raised a mound over the grave and fixed up the board, which looked quite imposing. While they were thus engaged, Nameless came in sight, climbing down from the now almost leafless trees which overshadowed the spot.

“Come, Nameless,” said Vi, “and see the beautiful tomb we have put up to the Baron.”

The little man smiled sadly and patted Vi's head. “Capital!” he remarked. “I am glad to see how fond of the little bee-folk you have grown, and how you love them.”

"But, Nameless! aren't you going to tell us about yourself to-day?" said Vi, coaxingly. "You know we are very fond of you, too, and shall long for you to come back again, some day, to teach us more."

The little man sighed deeply. "I fear that may never be," he replied; and remained silent for some time.

At length Vi nestled closely to him and pleaded: "Won't you tell us about yourself?"

"Sit down, then," he replied, "and I will tell you the story of my life."

Nameless then related as follows—

"Many, many years ago—how long, it does not matter—there lived a certain Prince in a far-off land, who had a son—an only son, to whom he was devotedly attached. There was nothing in the whole world he would not have done to give his son pleasure, and everything that money could procure was at his disposal.

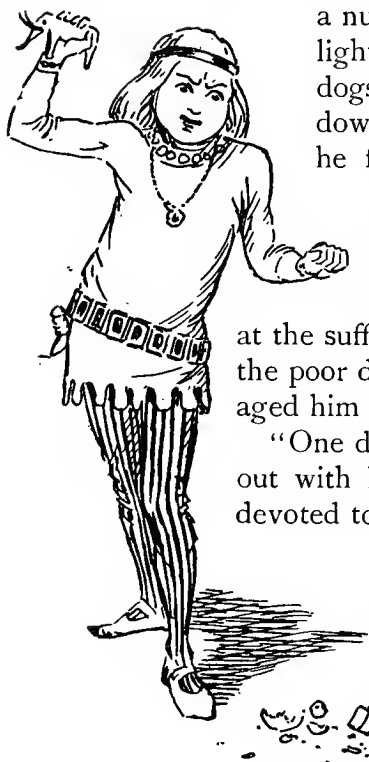
"I daresay you will envy this little boy; but he was most unhappy, for, having everything that he wanted, he was led to be selfish and wasteful. If anything displeased him, he would give way to the most violent passion, breaking his toys or trinkets, and tearing his clothes in his fury; and yet his father loved him: so much, that he had not the heart to correct him.

"But, worst of all, the young Prince learned not to consider dumb animals, of which he had





“I will tell you the story of my life.”



a number as pets. He delighted in making cats and dogs fight, and in tearing down the nests of the birds he found in the beautiful gardens of his father's house. I am sorry to say that his father's servants, by laughing at the sufferings he inflicted upon the poor dumb creatures, encouraged him in his wicked conduct.

"One day, when he was riding out with his falcon—for he was devoted to the sport of hawking—he chanced to meet an old woman, bent with age and footsore, who implored of him an alms. The Prince saw in her a fine occasion for one of his

heartless jokes; so, calling a sling-thrower who was of his company, he took several sling-stones, which he put in his purse, having previously removed all the money it contained, and sent the purse to the beggar-dame as a gift.

"The old woman, when she opened the purse and found that it contained nothing but peb-



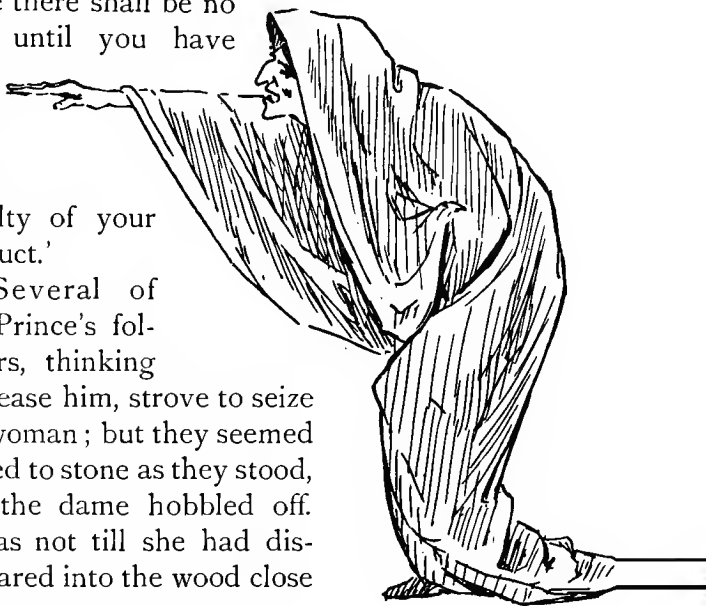
"He chanced to meet an old woman."

bles, was very wroth. Stretching forth her arms, she laid a terrible curse upon the Prince.

“‘Young master,’ she shrieked, ‘I know you now for what you are—a cruel, heartless coward; one who will make a jest of the weakness of others, and laugh at their pain and sorrow.

“‘Laugh on! Laugh on! For the days of your laughter shall soon be ended, and sorrows shall come thick upon you. You laughed at the sorrows of animals, and were cruel to them; you sought to laugh at me, little knowing who I am! But I curse you, and to my curse there shall be no end, until you have have paid the full penalty of your conduct.’

“Several of the Prince’s followers, thinking to please him, strove to seize the woman; but they seemed turned to stone as they stood, and the dame hobbled off. It was not till she had disappeared into the wood close

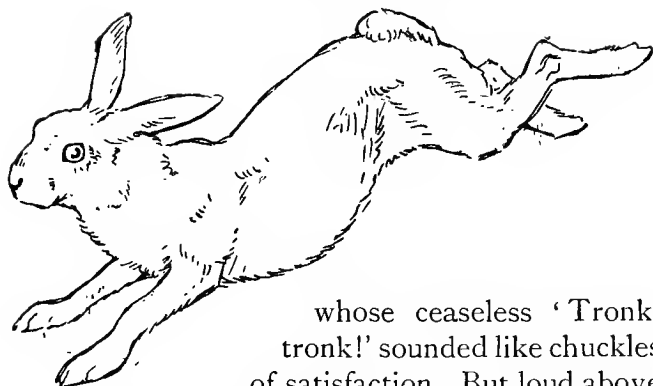


by, that they were able to move at all. As for the Prince, he snapped his fingers at the curse, and, with his attendants, rode gaily forward.

“But the dame’s spell seemed to be upon him, for his hunting was fruitless and his horse fell lame, chiefly because, in rage at the failure of his sport, he rode it so hard that it was sorely exhausted. His favourite falcon, too, refused to return to his lure, but soared joyfully away to freedom. His followers, wearied by the chase, fell back, one after another, and the Prince was left alone.

“At this moment a fat hare started up before him, and, regardless of his lame horse, he went in pursuit. Valiantly did the poor beast endeavour to keep pace with the hare, but it was useless, and, finally, in jumping a ditch, both horse and rider fell to the ground with a heavy crash, which rendered the latter insensible.

“When he recovered consciousness, the Prince found that his horse was dead, and that he himself, though severely bruised, was able, with pain, to walk. On looking round, he perceived the lights of a village in the distance, to which he directed his steps. But as he walked the lights seemed to move before him, now to one side, now to the other, while the bats and owls which circled about him hooted and shrieked, as if deriding his misfortune. Their cries were echoed by the frogs and toads



whose ceaseless 'Tronk, tronk!' sounded like chuckles of satisfaction. But loud above the chorus of bats and owls and frogs came a sound that was far more terrible.

"It was the howl of a wolf that had evidently struck upon his track, and was calling upon his companions to join in the chase. Presently the cry was answered by another, and another, until it grew into a chorus, every moment sounding nearer and nearer. The Prince, far too tired to run, struggled on towards a light proceeding from a pile of twigs, which burned in the middle of a circle of stones. Round this light he saw a number of crouching figures. Looking back, he could see the glowing eyes of the wolves as they approached. If he could only reach the fire, he thought, he would be safe.

"Suddenly he felt a clutch at his cloak: the first wolf had come up with him. He cast the garment away, and the hungry animal tore and

rent it in his rage, while the Prince, running forward, fell exhausted beside the fire, moaning with pain and trembling from fear. For a moment he looked up, and, in the ruddy flicker of the blaze, saw the wolves all around him in a circle, with gleaming teeth and glowing eyes. Then, out upon the night air, from the shadow of one of the stones came a deep voice—

“‘What mortal has thus dared to enter our enchanted ring?’

“And the wolves in chorus howled, ‘Who? —Who?’

“Again the voice spoke: ‘Death is the penalty for such as do!’

“And the wolves repeated, as if in echoing chorus, ‘Do!—Do!’

“The Prince rose from the ground, and flung himself upon his knees before the crouching figure whence the voice seemed to come.

“‘I pray you have mercy upon me!’ he said. ‘I am weary and bruised; I have lost my comrades, and am beset by these hungry wolves.’

“Then another voice took up the tale and



said—‘Who was it mocked the beggar-dame this day, and gave her an alms of stone?’

“And the wolf chorus echoed, ‘You!—You!’

“The chief figure rose from its crouching posture and stood in the middle of the ring.

“‘Mortal!’ thundered the shape, ‘we deal not with such as thou! Go, go; go to the wolves!’

“And the Prince saw the wolves standing, with blazing eyes, expectantly waiting for him.

“‘I pray you, good folk, whoever ye be, have pity on me, and give me sanctuary from these ravenous beasts! Were I to go beyond the circle of these stones, I should be a dead man.’

“‘Pity!’ said the form—and the other shapes around echoed the word—‘You had no pity on your horse, or your animals!’

“And the wolf-band howled again, ‘True!—True!’

“‘Friends,’ said the figure; ‘I was the crone to whom this cringing dog proffered a stone in lieu of alms. I was the hare which lured him to his fall. Has he not merited death?’

“The shadowy crowd replied with one voice, ‘Death!’

“‘Then,’ said the Prince, ‘I pray you, let my death be a gentle one, as befits my rank, rather than to be torn to pieces by yonder howling wolves.’





“The figure drew itself up to its full height, and stood towering above the shrinking prince.”

“The figure drew itself up to its full height, and stood towering above the shrinking Prince.

“‘Prate not to us of rank and birth!’ it thundered. ‘For such as you, nor rank, nor birth shall avail. But, listen to your doom! Verily, you shall die; but not yet. You shall be one of us, dead to the outward world, but alive to all the world of Nature. Your form shall be changed, and you shall learn the gravity of your crimes by living with the animals you have despised and tortured. To you shall be revealed the secrets of their inner life, and you shall mourn over their misfortunes, and feel for them when they are ill-treated.

“‘And so the seasons shall pass over you until you can find some child, or children, to whom you can impart your knowledge, and whom you may teach to love you, despite the fact that you are so wretched a creature. And now I make you one with us,’ and passing its long and skinny hands over the Prince’s face and body, the form returned to the shadow of the stone.

“As the hand of the unknown passed over him, the Prince felt a curious sensation. His body seemed to shrink, and his head to grow larger. His brain and heart, too, changed; for he no longer dreaded the wolves, among whom he now went fearlessly, and whose very howling seemed to tell him a tale of cold suffering and misery.

“So he lived for many days, seeking in vain for some child who might love him, and listen to him. But all seemed cruel and hard-hearted till, one day, he met——”



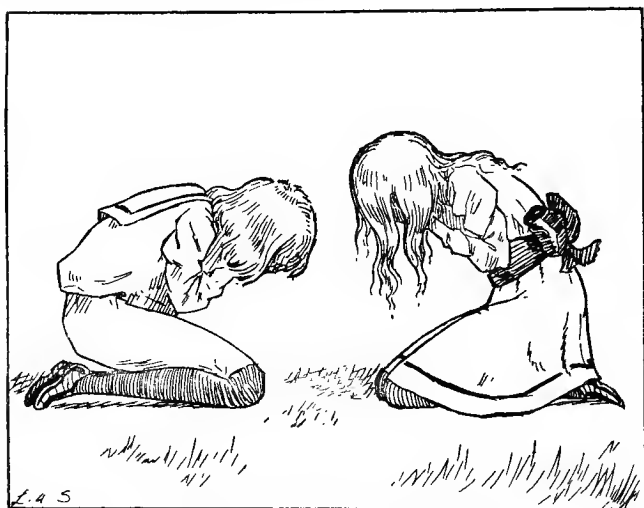
“Kissed his wrinkled face.”

“I know!” cried Jackie. “You met us, and you are a Prince, changed into a fairy Elf!”

“Poor, poor Nameless!” said Vi, as she turned her head towards him and kissed his

wrinkled face. "I am so sorry for you! And I am sure you are sorry you were ever cruel to animals."

As she kissed him, Vi saw a look of inexpressible joy steal over the gnarled features of their friend. His head grew smaller and his



"Both Jackie and Vi cried bitterly."

body larger. No longer was his hair grey and straggling, but crisply curled; while his face grew handsome, but sad. And yet, above the sadness was a look of joy and peace; but only for a moment, for his form began to wither and fall away until there remained nothing of their poor companion but a tiny heap of dust.

Both Jackie and Vi cried bitterly. Never before had they felt like this the loss of a friend.

"Oh, Jackie," said Vi, "we must bury him, too! Poor Nameless!" and she again began to cry.

\* \* \* \* \*

The next day the children raised the last of their tablets in the little cemetery, and the inscription ran—

"IN MEMORY OF  
NAMELESS  
JACKKIE AND VI  
LOVED HIM SO."



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WILLIAM BRENDON AND SON  
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